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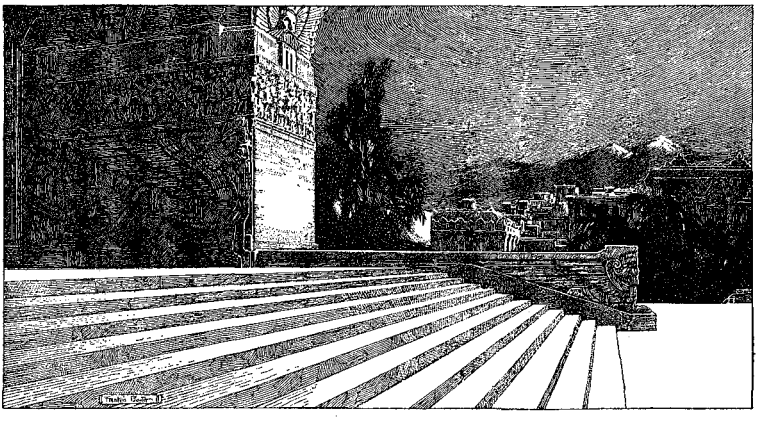

THE HOUSE OF RIMMON*

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

SCENE: *Damascus and the Mountains of Samaria.* TIME: 850 *B. C.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BENHADAD: King of Damascus.
REZON: High Priest of the House of Rimmon.
SABALLIDIN: A noble of Damascus.
HAZAEL, IZDHUBAR, RAKHAZ } Courtiers of Damascus.
SHUMAKIM: The King's Fool.
ELISHA: Prophet of Israel.
NAAMAN: Captain of the Armies of Damascus.
RUAHMAH: A Captive Maid of Israel.
TSARPI: Wife to Naaman.
KHAMMA, NUBTA: } Attendants of Tsarpi.
Soldiers, Servants, Courtiers, etc., etc.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*Night, in the garden of Naaman at Damascus. At the left, on a slightly raised terrace, the palace, with softly gleaming lights and music coming from the open latticed windows. The garden is full of oleanders, roses, pomegranates, abundance of crimson flowers; the air is heavy with their fragrance; a fountain at the right is plashing gently: behind it is an arbor covered with vines. Near the centre of the garden stands a small, hideous idol of the god Rimmon. Back of the arbor rises the lofty square tower of the House of Rimmon, which casts a shadow from the moon across the garden. The background is a wide, hilly landscape, with a highroad passing over the mountains toward the snow-clad summits of Mount Hermon in the distance. Enter by the palace door, the lady Tsarpi, robed in red and gold, and followed by her maids, Khamma and Nubta.*

(Tsarpi remains on the terrace: Khamma and Nubta go down into the garden, looking about, and returning to her.)

KHAMMA:

There's no one here; the garden is asleep.

NUBTA:

The flowers are nodding, all the birds abed,
And nothing wakes except the watchful stars!

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KHAMMA:

The stars are sentinels discreet and mute:
How many things they know and never tell!

TSARPI:

(*Impatiently.*)

Unlike the stars, how many things you tell
And do not know! When comes your master home?

NUBTA:

Lady, his armor-bearer brought us word
An hour ago, the master will be here
At moonset, not before.

TSARPI:

(*Smiling.*)

He haunts the camp
And leaves me much alone; yet I can pass
The time of absence not unhappily,
If I but know the time of his return.
An hour of moonlight yet! Khamma, my mirror!

(*Khamma gives her the hand-glass.*)

These curls are ill arranged, this veil too low,—
So,—that is better, careless maids! Withdraw,—
But warn me if your master should appear.

KHAMMA:

Mistress, have no concern; for when we hear
The clatter of his horse along the street,
We'll run this way and lead your dancers down
With song and laughter,—you shall know in time.

TSARPI:

(*Exeunt, Khamma and Nubta, laughing. Tsarpi descends the steps.*)

My guest is late; but he will surely come!
Hunger and thirst will bring him to my feet.
The man who burns to drain the cup of love,—
The priest whose greed of glory never fails,—
Both, both have need of me, and he will come.
And I,—what do I need? Why everything
That helps my beauty to a higher throne;
All that a priest can promise, all a man
Can give, and all a god bestow, I need:
This may a woman win, and this will I.

(*Enter Rezon quietly from the shadow of the trees. He stands behind Tsarpi and listens, smiling, to her last words. Then he drops his mantle of leopard-skin, and lifts his high-priest's rod of bronze, shaped at one end like a star, at the other like a thunderbolt.*)

REZON:

Tsarpi!

TSARPI:

(*She bows low before him.*)

The mistress of the house of Naaman
Salutes the keeper of the House of Rimmon.

REZON:

(*He lowers the star-point of the rod, which glows for a moment with rosy light above her head: then he kneels.*)

Rimmon receives you with his star of peace;
And I, his chosen minister, kneel down
Before your regal beauty, and implore
The welcome of the woman for the man.

TSARPI:

(*Giving him her hand, but holding off his embrace.*)

Thus Tsarpi welcomes Rezon! Nay, no more!
Till I have heard what errand brings you here
By night, within the garden of the man
Who hates you most, and fears you least, in all
Damascus.

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REZON:

(Rising, and speaking angrily.)

Believe me, I repay his scorn
With double hatred,—Naaman, the man
Whom the King honors and the people love,
Who stands against the nobles and the priests,
Against the oracles of Rimmon's House,
And cries, "We'll fight to keep Damascus free!"
This powerful fool, this impious devotee
Of liberty, who loves the city more
Than he reveres the city's ancient god:
This frigid husband who sets you below
His dream of duty to a horde of slaves:
This man I hate, and I will humble him.

TSARPI:

(Slowly, and thoughtfully.)

I think I hate him too. He stands apart
From me, ev'n while he holds me in his arms,
By something that I cannot understand,
Nor supple to my will, nor melt with tears,
Nor quite dissolve with blandishments, although
He swears he loves his wife next to his honor!
Next? That's too low! I will be first or nothing.

REZON:

With me you are the first, the absolute!
When you and I have triumphed you shall reign;
And you and I will bring this hero down.

TSARPI:

(Doubtfully.)

But how? For he is strong.

REZON:

By these, the eyes
Of Tsarpi; and by this, the rod of Rimmon.

TSARPI:

Speak clearly; tell your plan.

REZON:

(Confidentially.)

You know the host
Of the Assyrian king has broken forth
Again to conquer us. Envoys have come
From Shalmaneser to demand surrender.
Our king Benhadad wavers, for he knows
His weakness. All the nobles, all the rich,
Would purchase peace that they may grow more rich:
Only the people and the soldiers, led
By Naaman, would fight for liberty.
Blind fools! To-day the envoys came to pay
Their worship to our god, whom they adore
In Nineveh as Asshur's brother-god.
They talked with me in secret. Promises,
Great promises! For every noble house
That urges peace, a noble recompense:
The king, submissive, kept in royal state
And splendor: most of all, honor and wealth
Shall crown the House of Rimmon, and his priest,—
Yea, and his priestess. For we two will rise
Upon the city's fall. The common folk
Shall suffer; Naaman shall sink with them
In wreck; but I shall rise, and you shall rise

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Above me! You shall climb, through incense-smoke,
And days of pomp, and nights of revelry,
Glorious rites and ecstasies of love,
Unto the topmost room in Rimmon's tower,
The secret, lofty room, the couch of bliss,
And the divine embraces of the god.

TSARPI:

(Throwing out her arms in exultation.)

All, all I wish! What must I do for this?

REZON:

(Coming close to her and laying his hand on her arm.)

Turn Naaman away from thoughts of war;
Or purchase him with love's delights to yield
This point,—I care not how,—and afterwards
The future shall be ours.

TSARPI:

(Drawing back.)

And if I fail?

REZON:

(Following her.)

I have another shaft. The last appeal,
Before the king decides, is to the oracle
Of Rimmon. You shall read the signs!
A former priestess of his temple, you
Shall be the interpreter of heaven, and speak
A word to melt this brazen soldier's heart
Within his breast.

TSARPI:

(Still doubting.)

But if it flame instead?

REZON:

(Secretly.)

I know the way to quench that flame. The cup,
The parting cup your hand shall give to him!
What if the curse of Rimmon should infect
That wine with sacred venom, secretly
To work within his veins, week after week
Corrupting all the currents of his blood,
Dimming his eyes, wasting his flesh? What then?
Would he prevail in war? Would he come back
To glory, or to shame? What think you?

TSARPI:

(Startled.)

I?
I do not think; I only do my part.
But can the gods bless this?

REZON:

(With confidence.)

The gods can bless
Whatever they decree; their will makes right;
And this is for the glory of the house
Of Rimmon,—and for thee, my queen. Come, come!
The night grows dark; we'll perfect our alliance.

(Rezon draws her with him, embracing her, through the shadows of the garden. Ruahmah, who has been sleeping in the arbor, has been awakened during the dialogue, and has been dimly visible in her white dress, behind the vines. She parts them and comes out, pushing back her long dark hair from her temples.)

RUAHMAH:

(Bewildered and distressed.)

What have I heard? O God, what shame is this
Plotted beneath Thy pure and silent stars!
Was it for this that I was brought away
Captive from Israel's blessed hills to serve
A heathen mistress in a land of lies?

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Ah, treacherous, shameful priest! Ah, shameless wife
Of one too noble to suspect thy guilt!
The very greatness of his generous heart
Betrays him to their hands. What can I do?
Nothing,—a slave,—hated and mocked by all
My fellow-slaves! O bitter prison-life!
I smother in this black, betraying air
Of lust and luxury; I faint beneath
The shadow of this House of Rimmon. God
Have mercy! Lead me out to Israel.
To Israel!

(Music and laughter heard within the palace. The doors fly open and a flood of men and women, dancers, players, flushed with wine, dishevelled, pour down the steps, Khamma and Nubta with them. They crown the image with roses and dance around it. Ruahmah is discovered crouching beside the arbor. They drag her out before the image.)

NUBTA:

Look! Here's the Hebrew maid,—
She's homesick; let us comfort her!

KHAMMA:

(They put their arms around her.)

Yes, dancing is the cure for homesickness.
We'll make her dance.

RUAHMAH:

(She slips away.)

I pray you, let me go!
I cannot dance, I do not know your measures.

KHAMMA:

Then sing for us,—a song of Israel!

RUAHMAH:

How can I sing the songs of Israel
In this strange country? O my heart would break
With grief in every note of that dear music.

A SERVANT:

(They circle around her, striking her with rose-branches; she sinks to her knees, covering her face with her bare arms, which bleed.)

A stubborn and unfriendly maid! We'll whip her.

NUBTA:

(Clapping her hands.)

Look, look! She kneels to Rimmon, she is tamed.

RUAHMAH:

(Springing up and lifting her arms to the sky.)

Nay, not to this dumb idol, but to Him
Who made Orion and the seven stars!

ALL:

(They push her toward the fountain, laughing and shouting.)

She raves,—she mocks at Rimmon! Punish her!
The fountain! Wash her blasphemy away!

(In the open door of the palace Naaman appears, dressed in blue and silver, bareheaded and unarmed. He comes to the top of the steps and stands for a moment, astonished and angry.)

NAAMAN:

(Exeunt all except Ruahmah, who stands with her face covered by her hands. Naaman comes to her, laying his hand on her shoulder.)

Silence! What drunken rout is this? Begone,
Ye barking dogs and mewing cats! Out, all!
Poor child, what have they done to thee?

RUAHMAH:

(Turning and looking up in his face.)

Nothing,
My lord and master! They have harmed me not.

NAAMAN:

(Touching her arm.)

Dost call this nothing?

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RUAHMAH:

(*Looking down.*) Since my lord is come.

NAAMAN:

I do not know thy face,—who art thou, child?

RUAHMAH:

The handmaid of thy wife. These three years past
I have attended her.

NAAMAN:

Whence comest thou?
Thy voice is like thy mistress, but thy looks
Have something foreign. Tell thy name, thy land.

RUAHMAH:

(*Lifting her head.*) Ruahmah is my name, a captive maid,
The daughter of a prince in Israel,—
Where once, in olden days, I saw my lord
Ride through our highlands, when Samaria
Was allied with Damascus to defeat
Asshur, our common foe.

NAAMAN:

O glorious days,
Crowded with life! And thou rememberest them?

RUAHMAH:

(*With animation.*) As clear as yesterday! Master, I saw
Thee riding on a snow-white horse beside
Our king; and all we joyful little maids
Strewed boughs of palm along the victors' way;
For you had driven out the enemy,
Broken; and both our lands were friends and free.

NAAMAN:

(*Sadly.*) Well, they are past, those noble days! The friends
That fought for freedom stand apart, rivals
For Asshur's favor, like two jealous dogs
That snarl and bite each other, while they wait
The master's whip, enforcing peace. The days
When nations would imperil all to keep
Their liberties, are only memories now.
The common cause is lost,—and thou art brought,
The captive of some mercenary raid,
Some profitable, honorless foray,
To serve within my house. Dost thou fare well?

RUAHMAH:

Master, thou seest.

NAAMAN:

Yes, I see! My child,
Why do they hate thee so?

RUAHMAH:

I do not know,
Unless because I will not bow to Rimmon.

NAAMAN:

Thou needest not. I fear he is a god
Who pities not his people, will not save.
My heart is sick with doubt of him. But thou
Shalt hold thy faith,—I care not what it is,—
Worship thy god; but keep thy spirit free.

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(*He takes his chain and signet from his neck, giving them to her.*)

Here, take this chain and wear it with my seal,
None shall molest the maid who carries this.
Thou hast found favor in thy master's eyes;
Hast thou no other gift to ask of me?

RUAHMAH:

(*Earnestly.*)

My lord, I do entreat thee not to go
To-morrow to the council. Seek the King
And speak with him in secret; but avoid
The audience-hall.

NAAMAN:

(*With surprise.*)

Why, what is this? Thy wits
Are wandering. Why dost thou ask this thing
Impossible! My honor is engaged
To speak for war, to lead in war against
The Assyrian Bull and save Damascus.

RUAHMAH:

(*With confused earnestness.*)

Then, lord, if thou must go, I pray thee speak,—
I know not how,—but so that all must hear.
With magic of unanswerable words
Persuade thy foes. Yet watch,—beware,—

NAAMAN:

Of what?

RUAHMAH:

(*Walking away and wringing her hands.*)

I am entangled in my speech,—no light,—
How shall I tell him? He will not believe.
O my dear lord, thine enemies are they
Of thine own house. I pray thee to beware,—

(*Returning to Naaman.*)

Beware,—of Rimmon!

NAAMAN:

(*Looking at her with astonishment and pity, and laying his hand on her shoulder.*)

Child, thy words are wild;
Thy troubles have bewildered all thy brain.
Go, now, and fret no more; but sleep, and dream
Of Israel! For thou shalt see thy home
Among the hills again.

RUAHMAH:

(*She ascends the terrace slowly, Naaman watching her; then she turns and speaks to him, lifting her hand toward Mount Hermon in the distance.*)

Master, good-night.
And may thy slumber be as sweet and deep
As if thou camped at snowy Hermon's foot,
Amid the music of his waterfalls
And watched by winged sentries of the sky.
There friendly oaks enlace their boughs above
The weary head, pillowed on earth's kind breast,
And unpolluted breezes softly breathe
A song of sleep among the murmuring leaves.
There the big stars seem nearer, and the sun
Looks forth serene, undimmed by city's mirk
Or smoke of idol-temples, to behold
The waking wonder of the wide-spread world,
And life renews itself with every morn
In purest joy of living. May the Lord
Deliver thee, dear master, from the nets
Laid for thy feet, and lead thee out along
The open path, beneath the open sky!
Thou shalt be followed always by the heart
Of one poor captive maid who prays for thee.

(*Exit Ruahmah: Naaman stands looking after her.*)

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SCENE II.—*The audience-hall in Benhadad's palace. The sides of the hall are lined with lofty columns: the back opens toward the city, with descending steps; the House of Rimmon with its high tower is seen in the background. The throne is at the right in front; opposite is the royal door of entrance, guarded by four tall sentinels. When the curtain rises, they are the only persons in the hall. Enter at the rear between the columns, Rakhaz, Saballidin, Hazael, Izdubhar.*

IZDUBHAR:

(*An excited old man.*) The city is all in a turmoil. It boils like a pot of lentils. The people are foaming and bubbling round and round like beans in the pottage.

HAZAEL:

(*A lean, crafty man.*) Fear is a hot fire.

RAKHAZ:

(*A fat, pompous man, puffing and blowing.*) Well may they fear, for the Assyrians are not three days distant. They are blazing along like a waterspout to chop Damascus down like a handful of chaff.

SABALLIDIN:

(*Young and frank.*) Cannot Naaman drive them back?

RAKHAZ:

(*Loudly.*) Ho! Naaman? Where have you been living? Naaman is a broken reed whose claws have been cut. Build no hopes on that foundation, for it will upset in the midst of the sea and leave you hanging in the air.

SABALLIDIN:

(*Quietly.*) He clatters like a windmill. What would he say, Hazael?

HAZAEL:

(*Coldly.*) Naaman can do nothing without the command of the King; and the King fears to order the army to march without the approval of the gods. The High Priest is against it. The House of Rimmon is for peace with Asshur.

RAKHAZ:

(*Patronizingly.*) Yes, and all the nobles are for peace. We are the men whose wisdom lights the rudder that upholds the chariot of state. Would we be rich if we were not wise? Do we not know better than the rabble what medicine will silence this fire that threatens to drown us?

IZDUBHAR:

(*With fear.*) But if the Assyrians come, we shall all perish; they will despoil us all.

HAZAEL:

(*Smiling.*) Not us, my lord, only the common people. The envoys have offered favorable terms to the priests, and the nobles, and the King. No palace, no temple, shall be plundered. Only the shops, and the markets, and the houses of the multitude shall be given up to the Bull. He will eat his supper from the pot of lentils, not from our golden plate.

RAKHAZ:

(*With great importance.*) Yes, and all who speak for peace in the council shall be enriched; our heads shall be crowned with seats of honor in the processions of the Assyrian king. He needs wise counsellors to help him guide the ship of empire onto the solid rock of prosperity. You must be with us, my lords Izdubhar and Saballidin, and let the stars of your wisdom roar loudly for peace.

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IZDUBHAR:

(With a bewildered air.)

He talks like a tablet read upside down,—a wild ass braying in the wilderness. Yet there is policy in his words.

SABALLIDIN:

I know not. Can a kingdom live without a people or an army? If we let the Bull in to sup on the lentils, will he not make his breakfast in our vineyards?

(Enter other courtiers following Shumakim, a crooked little jester, in blue, green and red, a wreath of poppies around his neck and a flagon in his hand. He walks unsteadily, and stutters in his speech.)

HAZAEL:

(Contemptuously.)

Here is Shumakim, the King's fool, with his legs full of last night's wine.

SHUMAKIM:

(Balancing himself in front of them, and chuckling.)

(He points in turn at Rakhaz, Hazael and Izdubhar.)

Wrong, my lords, very wrong! This is not last night's wine, but a draught the King's physician gave me this morning for a cure. It sobers me amazingly! I know you all, my lords: any fool would know you. You, master, are a statesman; and you are a politician; and you are a patriot.

RAKHAZ:

(Stroking his chin.)

Am I a statesman? I felt something of the kind about me. But what is a statesman?

SHUMAKIM:

(Clapping him on the back.)

A politician that is stuffed with big words; a fat man in a mask; one that plays a solemn tune on a sackbut full o' wind.

HAZAEL:

(Sourly.)

And what is a politician?

SHUMAKIM:

(Grinning in his face.)

A statesman that has dropped his mask and cracked his sackbut. Men trust him for what he is, and he never deceives them, because he always lies.

IZDUBHAR:

(Indignantly.)

Why do you call me a patriot?

SHUMAKIM:

(Bowing in mock reverence.)

Because you know what is good for you; you love your country as you love your pelf. You feel for the common people,—as the wolf feels for the sheep.

SABALLIDIN:

(With friendly good-humor.)

And what am I?

SHUMAKIM:

(Throwing his arm over Saballidin's shoulder, and walking with him.)

A fool, master, just a plain fool; and there is hope of thee for that reason. Embrace me, brother, and taste this; but not too much,—it will intoxicate thee with sobriety.

(The hall has been slowly filling with courtiers and soldiers; a crowd of people begin to come up the steps at the rear, where they are halted by a chain guarded by servants of the palace. A bell tolls; the royal door is thrown open; the aged King crosses the hall slowly and takes his seat on the throne with the four tall sentinels standing behind him. All bow down shading their eyes with their hands.)

BENHADAD:

(With dignity.)

The hour of royal audience is come.
I'll hear the envoys of my brother king,
The son of Asshur. Are my counsellors
At hand? Where are the priests of Rimmon's House?

(Gongs sound. Rezon comes in from the rear, followed by a procession of priests in black and yellow. The courtiers bow; the King rises; Rezon takes his stand on the steps of the throne at the left of the King.)

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BENHADAD:

(*More anxiously.*)

Where is my faithful servant Naaman,
The captain of my host?

(*Trumpet sounds from the city. The crowd on the steps divide; the chain is lowered; Naaman enters, followed by six soldiers. He is dressed in chain-mail, with a silver helmet and a cloak of blue. He uncovers, and kneels on the steps of the throne at the King's right.*)

NAAMAN:

My lord the King,
The bearer of thy sword is here.

BENHADAD:

(*Giving Naaman his hand, and sitting down.*)

Welcome,
My strong right arm that never failed me yet!
I am in doubt,—but stay thou close to me
While I decide this cause. Where are the envoys?
Let them appear and give their message.

(*Enter the Assyrian envoys; one in white and the other in red; both with the golden Bull's head embroidered on their robes. They come from the right, rear, bow slightly before the throne, and take the centre of the hall.*)

WHITE ENVOY:

(*Stepping forward to the throne.*)

Greeting from Shalmaneser, Asshur's son,
The king who reigns at Nineveh
And takes his tribute from a thousand cities,
Unto Benhadad, monarch in Damascus!
The conquering Bull has come out of the north;
The south has fallen before him, and the west
His feet have trodden; Hamath is laid waste;
He pauses at your gate, invincible,—
To offer peace. The princes of your court,
The priests of Rimmon's house, and you, the King,
If you pay homage to your overlord,
Shall rest secure, and flourish as our friends.

(*He lays a yoke on the steps of the throne.*)

Assyria sends to you this gilded yoke;
Receive it as the sign of proffered peace.

BENHADAD:

(*Doubtfully.*)

What of the city? Said your king no word
Of our Damascus, and the many folk
That do inhabit her and make her great?
What of the soldiers who have fought for us?
The people who have sheltered 'neath our shield?

WHITE ENVOY:

Of these my royal master did not speak.

BENHADAD:

(*With perturbation.*)

Strange silence: Must we give them up to him?
Is this the price at which he offers us
The yoke of peace? What if we do refuse?

RED ENVOY:

(*Stepping forward.*)

Then ruthless war! War to the uttermost.
No quarter, no compassion, no escape!
The Bull will gore and trample in his fury
Nobles and priests and king,—none shall be spared!

(*He lays a long bull's horn, stained with blood, on the steps of the throne.*)

Before the throne we lay our second gift;
This bloody horn, the symbol of red war.

WHITE ENVOY:

Our message is delivered. Grant us leave
And safe conveyance, that we may return

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Unto our master. He will wait three days
To know your royal choice between his gifts.
Keep which you will and send the other back;
The red bull's horn your youngest page may bring;
But with the yoke, best send your mightiest army!

(*The Envoys retire, amid confused murmurs of the people, the King silent, his head sunken on his breast.*)

BENHADAD:

Proud words, a bitter message, hard to endure!
We are not now that force which feared no foe:
Our host is weakened, and our old allies
Have left us. Can we face this raging Bull
(*Many speak at once, confusedly.*) Alone, and beat him back? Give me your counsel.
What babblement is this? Were ye born at Babel?
Give me clear words and reasonable speech.

RAKHAZ:

(*Pompously.*)

O King, I am a reasonable man;
And there be some who call me very wise
And prudent; but of this I will not speak,
For I am also modest. Let me plead,
Persuade, and reason you to choose for peace.
This golden yoke may be a bitter draught,
But better far to fold it in our arms,
Than risk our cargoes in the savage horn
Of war. Shall we imperil all our wealth,
Our valuable lives? Nobles are few,
Rich men are rare, and wise men rarer still;
The precious jewels on the tree of life,
Wherein the common people are but bricks
And clay and rubble. Let the city go,
But save the corner-stones that float the ship!
Have I not spoken well?

BENHADAD:

(*Shaking his head.*)

Excellent well!
Most eloquent! But misty in the meaning.

HAZAEL:

(*With cold decision.*)

Then let me speak, O King, in plainer words!
The days of independent states are past:
The tide of empire sweeps across the earth;
Assyria rides it with resistless power
And thunders on to subjugate the world.
Oppose her, and we fight with Destiny;
Submit to her demands, and we shall ride
With her to victory. Therefore return
This bloody horn, the symbol of wild war,
With words of soft refusal, and accept
The golden yoke, Assyria's gift of peace.

NAAMAN:

(*Starting forward eagerly.*)

There is no peace beneath a conqueror's yoke,
My King, but shame and heaviness of heart!
For every state that barters liberty
To win imperial favor, shall be drained
Of her best blood, henceforth, in endless wars
To make the empire greater. Here's the choice:

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We fight to-day to keep our country free,
Or else we fight forevermore to help
Assyria bind the world as we are bound.
I am a soldier, and I know the hell
Of war! But I will gladly ride through hell
To save Damascus. Master, bid me ride!
Ten thousand chariots wait for your command;
And twenty thousand horsemen strain the leash
Of patience till you let them go; a throng
Of spearmen, archers, swordsmen, like the sea
Chafing against a dike, roar for the onset!
O master, let me launch your mighty host
Against the Bull,—we'll bring him to his knees!

(Cries of "War!" from the soldiers and the people; "peace!" from the courtiers and the priests. The King rises, turning toward Naaman, and seems about to speak. Rezon lifts his rod.)

REZON:

(With authority.)

Shall not the gods decide when mortals strive?
Rimmon is master of the city's fate;
He reigns in secret and his will is law;
We read his will, by our most ancient faith,
In omens and in signs of mystery.
Must we not hearken to his high commands?

BENHADAD:

(Sinking back on the throne, submissively.)

I am the faithful son of Rimmon's House.
Consult the oracle. But who shall read?

REZON:

(Naaman, standing on the steps of the throne, is startled, but controls himself.)

Tsarpi, the wife of Naaman, who served
Within the temple in her maiden years,
Shall be the mouthpiece of the mighty god,
To-day's high-priestess. Bring the sacrifice!

(Gongs and cymbals sound; enter priests carrying an altar on which a lamb is bound. The altar is placed in the centre of the hall. Tsarpi follows the priests, covered with a long transparent veil of black, sewn with gold stars; Ruahmah, in white, bears her train. Tsarpi stands before the altar, facing it, and lifts her right hand holding a knife. Ruahmah steps back, near the throne, her hands crossed on her breast, her head bowed. The priests close in around Tsarpi and the altar. The knife is seen to strike downward. Gongs and cymbals sound; cries of "Rimmon, hear us!" The circle of priests opens, and Tsarpi turns slowly to face the King.)

TSARPI:

(Monotonously.)

Black is the blood of the victim,
Rimmon is unfavorable,
Asratu is unfavorable;
They will not war against Asshur,
They will make a league with the God of Nineveh.
Evil is in store for Damascus,
A strong enemy will lay waste the land.
Therefore make peace with the Bull;
Hearken to the voice of Rimmon.

(She turns again to the altar, and the priests close in around her. Rezon lifts his rod toward the tower of the temple. A flash of lightning followed by thunder; smoke rises from the altar; all except Naaman and Ruahmah cover their faces. The circle of priests opens again, and Tsarpi comes forward slowly, chanting.)

Chant:

Hear the words of Rimmon! Thus your Maker speaketh:
I, the god of thunder, riding on the whirlwind,
I, the god of lightning, leaping from the storm-cloud,

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I will smite with vengeance him who dares defy me!
He who leads Damascus into war with Asshur,
Conquering or conquered, bears my curse upon him.
Surely shall my arrow strike his heart in secret,
Burn his flesh with fever, turn his blood to poison,
Brand him with corruption, drive him into darkness;
He alone shall perish, by the doom of Rimmon.

(All are terrified and look toward Naaman, shuddering. Ruahmah alone seems not to heed the curse, but stands with her eyes fixed on Naaman.)

RUAHMAH:

(Quietly to Naaman.)

Be not afraid! There is a greater God
Shall cover thee with His almighty wings:
Beneath his shield and buckler shalt thou trust.

BENHADAD:

(Tremulously.)

Repent, my son, thou must not brave this curse.

NAAMAN:

(Firmly.)

My King, there is no curse so terrible
As that which lights a bosom-fire for him
Who gives away his honor, to prolong
A craven life whose every breath is shame!
If I betray the men who follow me,
The city that has put her trust in me,
The country to whose service I am bound,
What king can shield me from my own deep scorn,
What god release me from that self-made hell?
The tender mercies of Assyria
I know; and they are cruel as creeping tigers.
Give up Damascus, and her streets will run
Rivers of innocent blood; the city's heart
That mighty, laboring heart, wounded and crushed
Beneath the brutal hooves of the wild Bull,
Will cry against her captain, sitting safe
Among the nobles, in some pleasant place.
I shall be safe,—safe from the threatened wrath
Of unknown gods, but damned forever by
The men I know,—that is the curse I fear.

BENHADAD:

(In a tone of awe.)

Speak not so high, my son. Must we not bow
Our heads before the sovereignties of heaven?
The unseen rulers are Divine.

NAAMAN:

(With quiet intensity.)

O King,
I am unlearned in the lore of priests;
Yet well I know that there are hidden powers
About us, working mortal weal and woe
Beyond the force of mortals to control.
And if these powers appear in love and truth,
I think they must be gods, and worship them.
But if their secret will is manifest
In blind decrees of sheer omnipotence,
That punish where no fault is found, and smite
The poor with undeserved calamity,
And pierce the undefended in the dark
With arrows of injustice, and foredoom
Offenceless souls to burn in endless pain,
I will not call this fierce almightiness
Divine. Though I must bear, with every man,

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The burden of my life ordained, I'll keep
My soul unterrified, and tread the path
Of truth and honor with a steady heart!
(Resolutely.) But if I err in this; and if there be
Divinities whose will is cruel, unjust,
Capricious and supreme, I will forswear
The favor of these gods, and take my part
With man to suffer and for man to die.
(To the courtiers.) Have ye not heard, my lords? The oracle
Proclaims to me, to me alone, the doom
Of vengeance if I lead the army out.
"Conquered or conquering!" I grip that chance!
Damascus free, her foes all beaten back,
The people saved from slavery, the King
Upheld in honor on his ancient throne,—
O what's the cost of this? I'll gladly pay
Whatever gods there be, whatever price
(Pointing to the yoke and speaking eagerly to the King.) They ask for this one victory. Give me
This gilded sign of shame to carry back;
I'll shake it in the face of Asshur's king,
And break it on his teeth.

BENHADAD:

(Rising, with a solemn gesture.) Then go, my never-beaten captain, go!
And may the powers that hear thy solemn vow
Forgive thy rashness for Damascus' sake,
Prosper thy fighting, and remit thy pledge.

REZON:

(Standing beside the altar.) The pledge, O King, this man must seal his pledge
At Rimmon's altar. He must take the cup
Of soldier-sacrament, and bind himself
By thrice-performed libation to abide
The fate he has invoked.

NAAMAN:

(Slowly.) And so I will.

(He comes down the steps, toward the altar, where Rezon is filling the cup which Tsarpi holds. Ruahmah throws herself before Naaman, clasping his knees.)

RUAHMAH:

(Passionately.) My lord, I do beseech you, stay! There's death
Within that cup. It is an offering
To devils. See, the wine blazes like fire,
It flows like blood, it is a cursed cup,
Fulfilled of treachery and hate.
Dear master, noble master, touch it not!

NAAMAN:

(Gives her into the hands of Saballidin.) Poor maid, thy brain is still distraught. Fear not
(Takes the cup from Tsarpi's hand.) But let me go! Here, treat her tenderly!
Can harm befall me from the wife who bears
(Pours libation.) My name? I take the cup of fate from her.
(Again.) I greet the unknown powers;
(Again.) I will perform my vow;
(He drains the cup, and lets it fall.) I will abide my fate;
I pledge my life to keep Damascus free.

CURTAIN.

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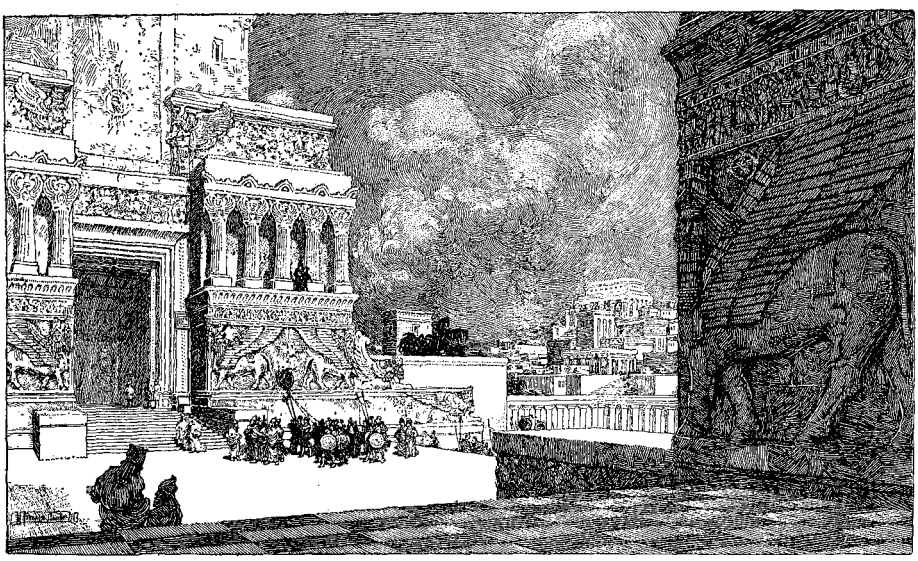

ACT II

SCENE.—*The court of the House of Rimmon. At the back the broad steps and double doors of the shrine: Above them the tower of the god, its summit invisible. Enter various groups of citizens, talking, laughing, shouting: Rakhaz, Hazael, Shumakim and others.*

FIRST CITIZEN:

(*With excitement.*) Great news, glorious news, the Assyrians are beaten!

SECOND CITIZEN:

Naaman is returning, crowned with victory. Glory to our noble captain!

THIRD CITIZEN:

No, he is killed. I had it from one of the camp-followers who saw him fall at the head of the battle. They are bringing his body to bury it with honor. O sorrowful victory!

RAKHAZ:

(*Condescendingly.*) Peace, my good fellows, you are ignorant, you have not been rightly informed, I will misinform you. The accounts of Naaman's death are overdrawn. He was killed, but his life has been preserved. One of his wounds was mortal, but the other three were curable, and by these the physicians have saved him.

SHUMAKIM:

(*Balancing himself before Rakhaz in pretended admiration.*) O wonderful! Most admirable logic! One mortal, and three curable, therefore he must recover as it were, by three to one. Rakhaz, do you know that you are a marvelous man?

RAKHAZ:

Yes, I know it, but I make no boast of my knowledge.

SHUMAKIM:

Too modest, for in knowing this you know what is unknown to any other in Damascus!

(*Enter, from the right, Saballidin in armor; from the left, Tsarpi with her attendants, among whom is Ruahmah.*)

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HAZAEL:

Here is Saballidin, we'll question him;
He was enflamed by Naaman's fiery words,
And rode with him to battle. Good, my lord,
We hail you as a herald of the fight
You helped to win. Give us authentic news
Of your great general! Is he safe and well?
When will he come? Or will he come at all?

SABALLIDIN:

(*All gather around him, listening eagerly.*)

He comes but now, returning from the field
Where he hath gained a crown of deathless fame.
Three times he led the charge; three times he fell
Wounded, and the Assyrians beat us back.
Yet every wound was but a spur to urge
His valor onward. In the last attack
He rode before us as the crested wave
That heads the flood; and lo, our enemies
Were broken like a dam of river-reeds,
Burst by the torrent, scattered, swept away!
But look! the Assyrian king in wavering flight
Is lodged like driftwood on a little hill,
Encircled by his guard, and stands at bay.
Then Naaman, followed hotly by a score
Of whirlwind riders, hammers through the hedge
Of spearmen, brandishing the golden yoke:
"Take back this gift," he cries; and shatters it
On Shalmaneser's helmet. So the fight
Dissolves in universal rout: the king,
His chariots and his horsemen melt away:
Our captain stands the master of the field,
(*Shouts of joy and applause.*) And saviour of Damascus! Now he brings,
First to the king, report of this great triumph.

RUAHMAH:

(*Coming close to Saballidin.*)

But what of him who won it? Fares he well?
My mistress would receive some word of him.

SABALLIDIN:

Hath she not heard?

RUAHMAH:

But one brief message came:
A tablet saying, "We have fought and conquered,"
No word of his own person. Fares he well?

SABALLIDIN:

(*Sadly.*)

Alas, most ill! For he is like a man
Consumed by some strange sickness: wasted, wan,—
His eyes are dimmed so that scarce can see;
His ears are dulled; his fearless face is pale
As one who walks to meet a certain doom
Yet will not flinch. It is most pitiful,—
But you shall see.

RUAHMAH:

(*Proudly.*)

Yea, we shall see a man
Who took upon himself his country's burden, dared
To hazard all to save the poor and helpless;
A man who bears the wrath of evil powers
Unknown, and pays the hero's sacrifice.

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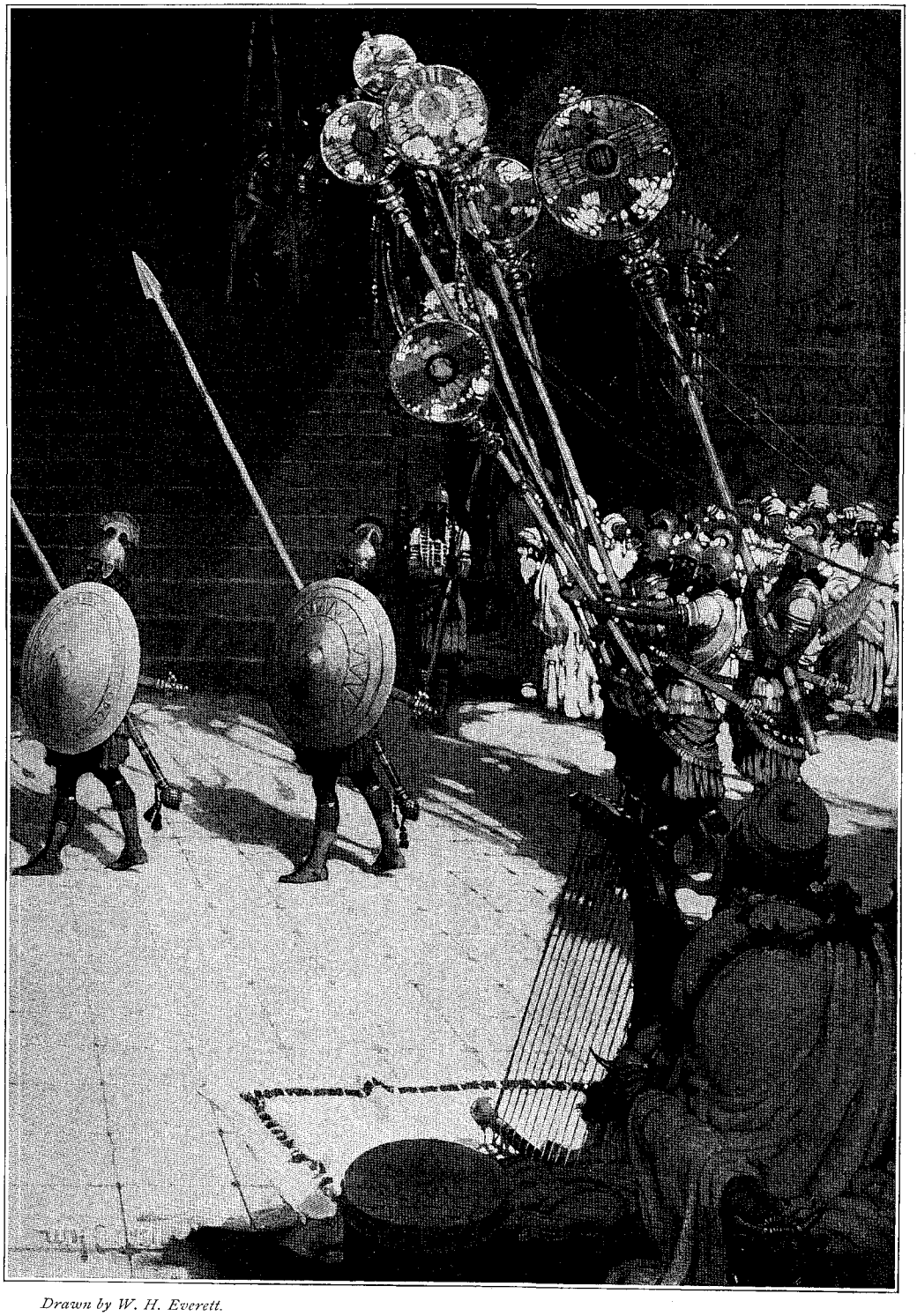

Drawn by W. H. Everett.

The standards of his host are thine!—Page 145.

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(Enter Benhadad with courtiers.)

BENHADAD:

Where is my faithful servant Naaman,
The captain of my host?

SABALLIDIN:

My lord, he comes.

(Trumpet sounds. Enter company of soldiers in armor. Then four soldiers bearing captured standards of Asshur. Naaman follows, very pale, his armor dinted and stained; he is blind, and guides himself by cords from the standards on each side, but walks firmly. The doors of the temple open slightly, and Rezon appears at the top of the steps. Naaman lets the cords fall, and gropes his way for a few paces.)

NAAMAN:

(He sinks on one knee.)

Where is my King?
Master, the bearer of thy sword returns.
The golden yoke thou gavest me I broke
On him who sent it. Asshur's Bull hath fled
Dis-horned. The standards of his host are thine!
Damascus is all thine, at peace, and free!

BENHADAD:

(Holding out his arms.)

Thou art a mighty man of valor! Come,
And let me fold thy courage to my heart.

REZON:

(Lifting his rod and speaking with harsh triumph.)

Forbear, O King! Stand back from him, all men!
By the great name of Rimmon I proclaim
This man a leper! On his brow I see
The death-white seal, the finger-print of doom!
That tiny spot will spread, eating his flesh,
Gnawing his fingers bone from bone, until
The impious heart that dared defy the gods
Dissolves in the slow death which now begins.
Unclean! unclean! Henceforward he is dead:
No human hand shall touch him, and no home
Of men shall give him shelter. He shall walk
Only with corpses of the selfsame death
Down the long path to a forgotten tomb.
Avoid, depart, I do adjure you all,
Leave him to god,—the leper Naaman!

(All shrink back horrified. Rezon retires into the temple; the crowd melts away, wailing: Tsarpi is among the first to go, followed by her attendants, except Ruahmah, who crouches, with her face covered, not far from Naaman.)

BENHADAD:

(Lingering and turning back.)

Alas, my son! O Naaman, my son!
Why did I let thee go? Thou art cast out
Irrevocably from the city's life
Which thou hast saved. Who can resist the gods?
I must obey the law, and touch thy hand
Never again. Yet none shall take from thee
Thy glorious title, captain of my host!
I will provide for thee, and thou shalt dwell
With guards of honor in a house of mine
Always. Damascus never shall forget
What thou hast done! O miserable words
Of crowned impotence! O mockery of power
Given to kings, who cannot even defend
Their dearest from the secret wrath of heaven!
Naaman, my son, my son!

(Exit.)

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NAAMAN:

(*Slowly, passing his hand over his eyes, and looking up.*)

Am I alone
With thee, inexorable one, whose pride
Offended takes this horrible revenge?
I must submit my mortal flesh to thee,
Almighty, but I will not call thee god!
Yet thou hast found the way to wound my soul
Most deeply through the flesh; and I must find
The way to let my wounded soul escape!
(*Drawing his sword.*) Come, my last friend, thou art more merciful
Than Rimmon. Why should I endure the doom
He sends me? Irretrievably cut off
From all dear intercourse of human love,
From all the tender touch of human hands,
From all brave comradeship with brother-men,
With eyes that see no faces through this dark,
With ears that hear all voices far away,
Why should I cling to misery, and grope
My long, long way from pain to pain, alone?

RUAHMAH:

(*At his feet.*)

Nay, not alone, dear lord, for I am here;
And I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!

NAAMAN:

(*Astonished.*)

What voice is that? The silence of my tomb
Is broken by a ray of music,—whose?

RUAHMAH:

(*Rising.*)

The one who loves thee best in all the world.

NAAMAN:

(*At first doubtfully, then with joy.*)

Why that should be,—O dare I dream it true?
Tsarpi, my wife? Have I misjudged thy heart
As cold and proud? How nobly thou forgivest!
Thou com'st to hold me from the last disgrace,—
The coward's flight into the dark. Go back
Unstained, my sword! Life is endurable
While there is one alive on earth who loves us.

RUAHMAH:

(*Agitated.*)

My lord,—my lord,—O listen! You have erred,—
You do mistake me now,—this dream—

NAAMAN:

(*Earnestly, and with pleading.*)

Ah, wake me not! For I can conquer death
Dreaming this dream. Let me at last believe,
Though gods are cruel, a woman can be kind.
Grant me but this! For see,—I ask so little,—
Only to know that thou art faithful,—
Only to lean upon the thought that thou,
My wife, art near me, though I touch thee not,—
O this will hold me up, though it be given
From pity more than love.

RUAHMAH:

(*Trembling, and speaking slowly.*)

Not so, my lord!
My pity is a stream; my pride of thee
Is like the sea that doth engulf the stream;
My love for thee is like the sovran moon

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That rules the sea. The tides that fill my soul
Flow unto thee and follow after thee;
And where thou goest I will go; and where
Thou diest I will die,—in the same hour.

(She lays her hand on his arm. He draws back.)

NAAMAN:

O touch me not! Thou shalt not share my doom.

RUAHMAH:

(With increasing strength.)

Entreat me not to go. I will obey
In all but this; but rob me not of this
The only boon that makes life worth the living,—
To walk beside thee day by day, and keep
Thy foot from stumbling; to prepare thy food
When thou art hungry, music for thy rest,
And cheerful words to comfort thy black hour;
And so to lead thee ever on, and on,
Through darkness, till we find the door of hope.

NAAMAN:

What word is that? The leper has no hope.

RUAHMAH:

(Confidently and with tenderness.)

Dear lord, the mark upon thy brow is yet
No broader than my little finger-nail.
Thy force is not abated, and thy step
Is firm. Wilt thou surrender to the enemy
Before thy strength is touched? Why, let me put
A drop of courage from my breast in thine.
There is a hope for thee. The captive maid
Of Israel who dwelt within thy house
Knew of a god very compassionate,
Long-suffering, slow to anger, one who heals
The sick, hath pity on the fatherless,
And saves the poor and him who has no helper.
His prophet dwells nigh to Samaria;
And I have heard that he hath brought the dead
To life again. We'll go to him. The King,
If I beseech him, will appoint a guard
Of thine own soldiers and Saballidin,
Thy friend, to convoy us upon our journey.
He'll give us royal letters to the king
Of Israel to make our welcome sure;
And we will take the open road, beneath
The open sky, to-morrow, and go on
Together till we find the door of hope.
Come, come with me!

(She grasps his hand.)

NAAMAN:

(Drawing back)

Thou must not touch me!

RUAHMAH:

(Unclasping her girdle and putting the end in his hand.)

Take my girdle, then!

NAAMAN:

(Kissing the clasp of the girdle.)

I do begin to think there is a God,
Since love on earth can work such miracles!

CURTAIN.

(To be concluded.)

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THE DOWRY

By Margaret Sherwood

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. WALTER TAYLOR

IT was spring-time in Paris, with gleams of golden sunshine brightening the gray streets, and sweet cries of early flowers, anemone, hyacinth, and crocus, everywhere. Even the river was flecked with blue and gold, visible to duller eyes than those of the girl who was carried swiftly across the long Pont des Arts. To her the long-haired art students, the little boys in black aprons, the odd old lady with the grand profile standing at a book-stall on the quay were cause for exquisite wonder, and when the carriage stopped at the door of the Hôtel du Lion in the Rue de Vannes, and Madame appeared, bowing graciously at her office door, Kathleen felt that she was entering the ivory gate of dreams.

Kathleen and the spring-time came together, and both stirred the blood of the guests at the Hôtel du Lion. Every one knew that a young girl and an elderly lady had come early in the afternoon and had taken two large rooms *au deuxième;* every one knew that Kathleen's hair was dark as summer dusk and that of Cousin Louise soft and gray, for some had looked out of the windows and some over the railing. Was not this Paris, and did not all yearn continually for something new?

Strangers, though rare, were by no means unknown at the Hôtel du Lion, for the art students and the literary folk who dwelt there were quite in the habit of recommending it to their friends. It was a retired spot, though well within hearing of the noisy cries of Paris streets, with a bit of garden behind and a stretch of river visible from the upper windows, a home of young folk and of old hopes—a few of which had come true. An air of the Latin quarter pervaded the whole, in a statuette or a picture left by the creator as a present for Madame, or, in sorrier case, as payment for board. It was a place with a history, venerable but clean in every sense of the word; and now had come Kathleen from America to join the army of workers, for she was about to enter upon a course of study of Celtic literature at the Sorbonne.

Past the sketch upon the plaster wall of Pan piping to wood nymphs, done by a student of the seventies, Kathleen led Cousin Louise down to dinner; and the smile of Madame at the head of her long table, the odd folk, the rustle of quick French were to the girl full of enchantment. If she studied her fellow-guests under her long lashes, they, in turn, studied her; and the soft, questioning French when she spoke to the waiter, the grace with which her head bent over that of Cousin Louise, escaped none of them. M. Adolphe Mostet of Julien's quite forgot his own reflection in the glass opposite, though it gave back faithfully his drooping locks and *négligé* collar He was thinking how wonderful the girl's face would be in a picture of spring which he, nobody else, could paint. Even Mr. Neulings, the Paris respresentative of the London and Wessex bank, looked frankly interested, and it was only the Count, the incomprehensible Count, who did not glance her way. Kathleen, meanwhile went on from marvellous soup to the raisins of dessert, quite unaware that anyone was interested in her; she was too eagerly interested herself to think of that, for she had never been in Paris, never been anywhere at all, and neither in Hellespont, New York, where she had been born, nor in the Connecticut town where she had attended a select boarding-school had there been artist or poet to tell her that her face was one to claim the homage of men's eyes.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—the days fled fast. Kathleen watched the gay pageant of Paris and liked it all, partly because she did not understand. The nodding plumes and wreathed smiles of the Champs Élysées, the painted folk upon the walls of the Louvre, and the painted and unpainted folk moving past; the loud street cries and swift street scenes were to her as marvellous as a fairy tale. Her new friends

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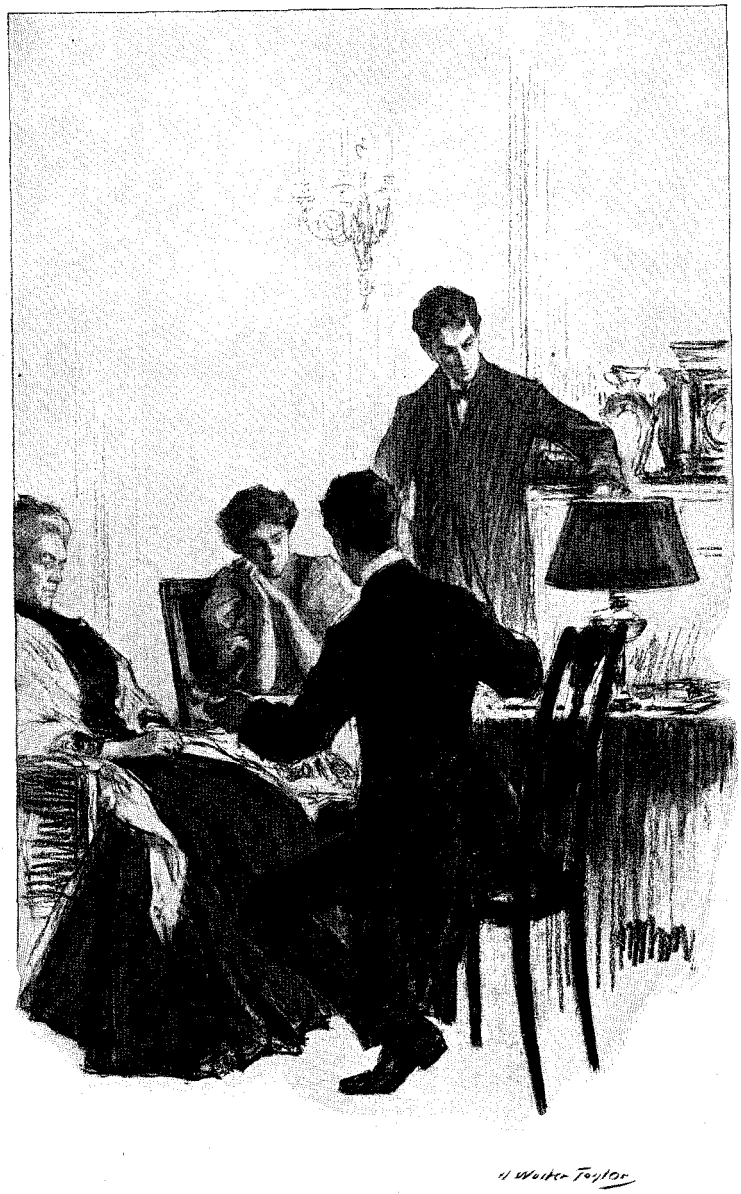

The young Count found himself, . . . recounting to a little group tales he had heard.—Page 150.

at the Hôtel du Lion, perhaps because of her joy in the world of strange things, set themselves the task of entertaining her. Did she love stained glass? Go to the Sainte Chapelle; old marbles? there was the Hôtel de Cluny; odd folk? ah, she must see droll Mrs. Faunce, the old Irish lady, who appeared at the hotel now and then. Even more zealous than the old inhabitants in the task of caring for the newcomers were two fellow country-women from Smithville, Ohio.

"Do you know," Miss Stevens would ask, Miss Stevens, who had prepared herself for foreign travel by reading a book of one hundred useful facts, "that the whole

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solar system is travelling toward Vega at the rate of six hundred miles a minute?"

Before a week had passed Kathleen was on terms of good comradeship with them all, save the odd gentleman at the end of the table with the clear dark eyes, the clear dark skin, the finished and perfect manner, M. le Comte Denis François Amédée Beauregard of Château Miraban in Brittany, who was one of the guests and yet not of them. Perhaps the others were shy in his presence, for titles came rarely to the Hôtel du Lion; perhaps he felt long-vanished fingers of gentlefolk of the old régime holding him apart.

"Monsieur le Comte and his mother have had a difference," admitted Madame when her guests demanded an explanation of this alien presence. "Some friend had told him of us, and he has left home for a time. He is greatly grieved but firm—his mother also. We wait the result." More she refused to say, save to Mr. Neulings, who, in his character of oldest inhabitant, was privileged. To him she confided that Count Beauregard was passionately interested in science, his mother as passionately opposed to his study. She would have him marry Mlle. Vinet, for he was poor, and live at ease at Château Miraban.

"Monsieur prefers toil; he abhors idleness at the Château; he abhors Mlle. Vinet. He is what you say—stiff-necked, peeg-headed, and he studies at the École de Médicine."

Sometimes the lonely gentleman glanced wistfully into the salon in evenings as he went up to his own rooms or out to the theatre, leaving the others to make merry, and on one of these occasions Madame captured him and carried him into her parlor quite after the fashion of the spider with the fly. M. Mostet was at the piano; Mr. Neulings was tactfully entertaining the two American ladies by telling them how despicable all Americans are; and the young Count found himself, how he did not know, recounting to a little group tales he had heard from the lips of Breton peasant folk on his estate. One was of a water fay who won a mortal away to fairy land, and when it was finished he looked in wonder, for all Kathleen's delight was in her face, where color was flashing in rhythmic waves. It was part of the delight of this story-book land that a person so remote and terrifying should turn into a magician who could bring her Celtic folk-lore straight from its source.

"Monsieur," she ventured, in her pretty, hesitating French, "your story interests me deeply. I am of Celtic birth."

"I too," said the Count.

"I am studying Celtic literature at the Sorbonne, only the lectures have been very disappointing, all about disputed dates and derivations of names, while the beauty and the life of the old tales slip away. And I came all the way across the Atlantic to hear them!"

He started at the word Sorbonne, and mentally cursed the fashions of foreign folk which permitted this exquisite creature to go forth into the public highway intent on men's tasks. However, as he decided the next night when she came directly to him in the salon and asked for another fairy tale, she did strange things without loss of her loveliness, and her action did not shock him as it did M. Mostet. There was a look about her as of the maidens about Quimper, and, as he watched her while he told her the story as he had heard it from the old woman who lived under the cliff of Tristram as a swineherd, he decided that a common Celtic ancestry meant kinship reaching, not only very far back but very far down. She puzzled him, this girl who was thinking, not about her face or her clothes, but about old manuscripts, and his French head kept asking his Breton heart: "Is it womanly?"

Slowly the Count began to cultivate the acquaintance of Cousin Louise, and his broken English, with her broken French, which was that of the young ladies of the sixties in a Philadelphia boarding-school, made a pretty bit of comedy. A simple lady and a sweet, she smiled graciously upon him, and a pale pink flush came into her cheeks when her friends rallied her upon her admirer. M. le Comte begged to be permitted, since he knew his Paris so well, to serve now and then as guide; so it came to pass that he paced the walks at stately Versailles side by side with Kathleen and the gray-haired lady, and the ordered leaves smelled not less freshly sweet than the wild ones of the woodland. The unadmitted deafness of Cousin Louise left the two young folk alone more than any one realized, and between them grew up a

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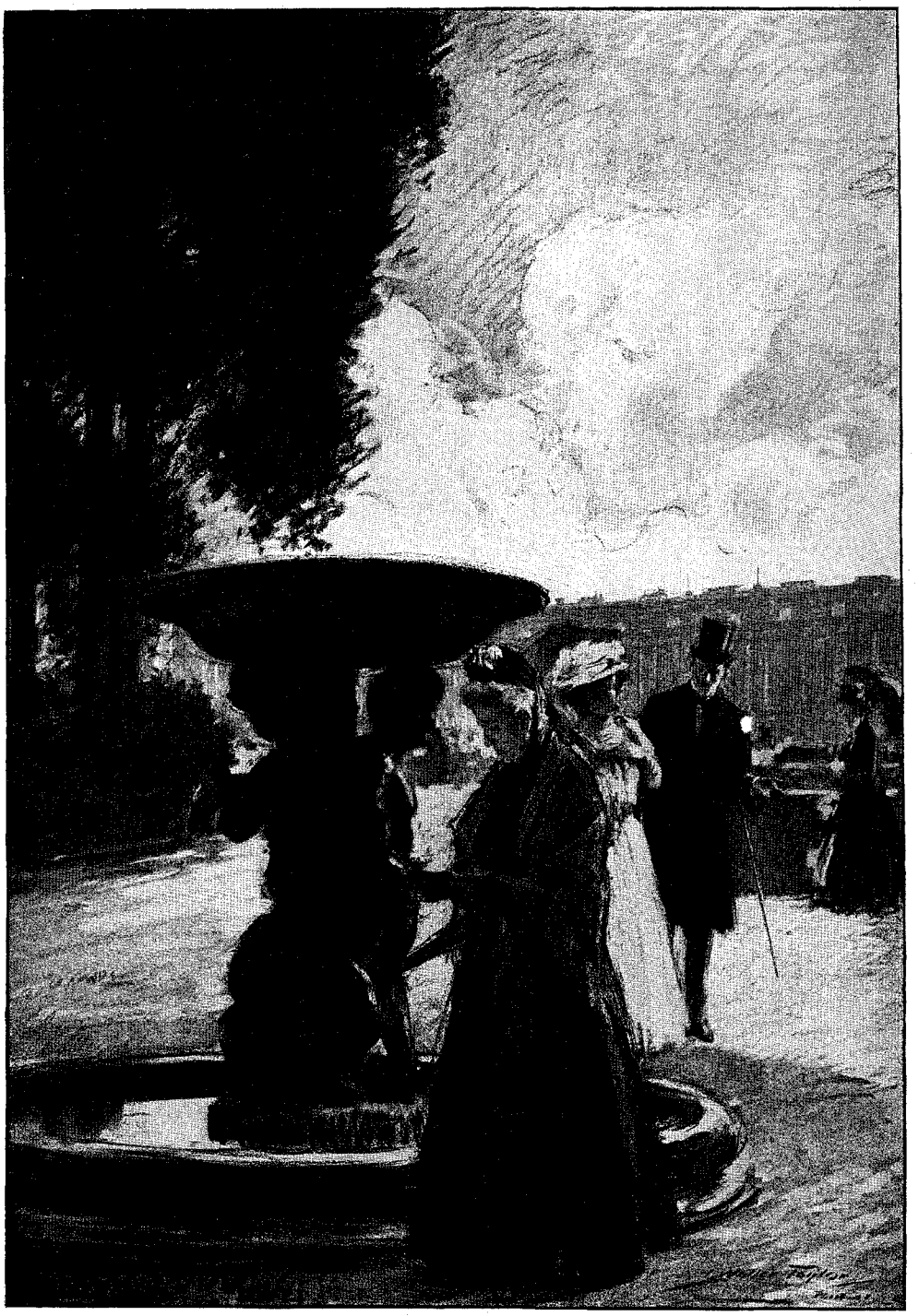

Drawn by F. Walter Taylor.

M. le Comte begged to be permitted to serve now and then as a guide.—Page 150.

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companionship made partly of reminiscences of much that had happened before they were born, of the passion of Deirdre, and the homesickness in heaven of Oisin for the sweet fields of earth. In the swift journeyings through the swift streets the Count saw not only that Celtic foreworld, but his Paris reflected in the girl's eyes, and the vivid life took on a color and a charm unknown before. He loved to bring to her face that intent look of eagerness, though he chafed a bit under the knowledge that he was of interest to her only because of the ideas which he suggested. What manner of woman folk was this, he asked himself, that thought of you only as a living soul,

The door was flung open and a marvellous personage appeared.—Page 154

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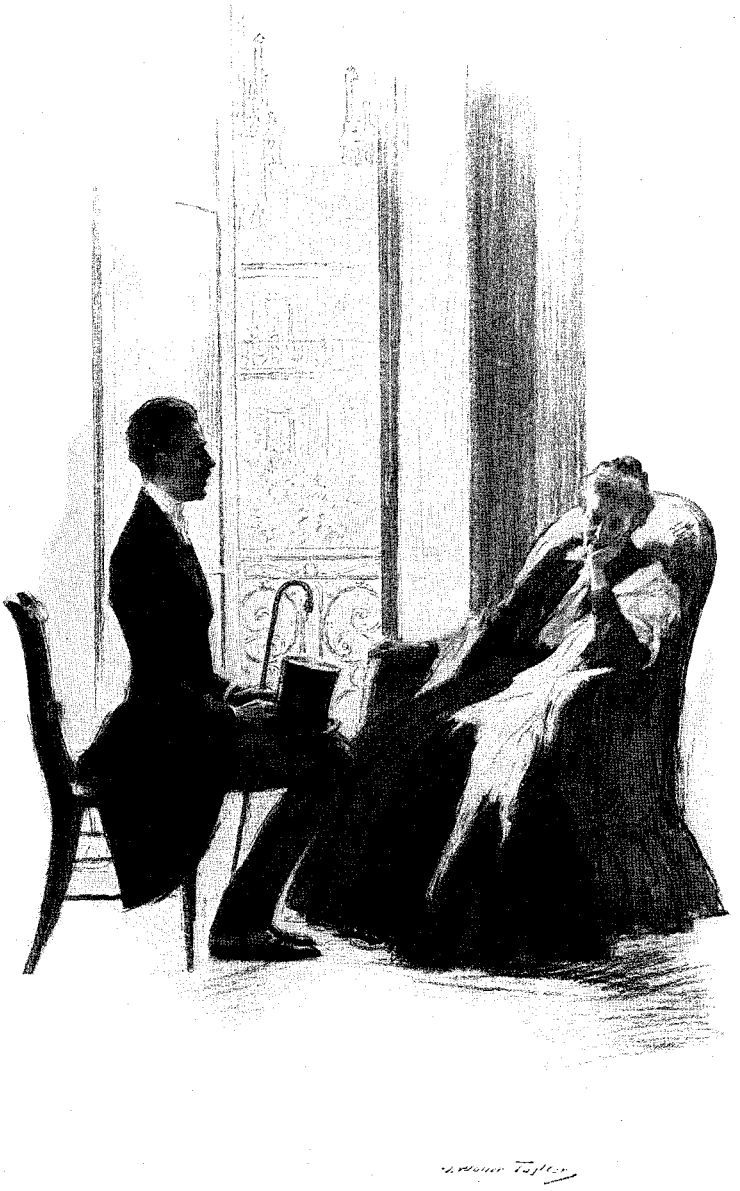

Seeking out Cousin Louise he formally asked permission.—Page 157.

forgetting that you were a Frenchman, and young? Then the time came when Count Denis was forced to confess to himself, ruefully, that he was at the end of his inherited tradition of folk-lore, which had given him the privilege of bringing to this seeker after beauty what the Sorbonne denies. That day he made a pilgrimage to all the libraries he knew; that night he worked for long hours with learned treatises on Celtic legend, and the next day came his reward. In the green shadows of the Bois de Boulogne, while Cousin Louise smiled the smile of the unhearing, he told Kathleen a bit of

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legend that she did not know, about the Morrigu, war goddess of enchanted shapes, who came against Cuchulain in many forms, as a marvellous woman with red eyebrows, a black eel, a gray wolf. Idly interpreting the symbolism of the old story, he played upon the girl as one plays upon a stringed instrument. A hint of beauty in the tale, he reflected, brought brilliant light to eyes and face; a change of mood—and it went out like a flame. The thought came to him, in the leafy, lichen-walled quiet, that life could hold no dearer task for him than that of evoking this subtle charm, pursuing it while it fled. Ah, his accursed poverty!

That night at dinner a trying moment came. M. Mostet, while eloquently describing his latest picture, was interrupted by Miss Stevens, who flung to the company her seventy-first fact, "Venus turns an unchanging face to the sun." Then her friend, Miss Neckar, plunged into the conversation, saying that to-day she had visited the place where Marie Antoinette was "gelatined." Kathleen was trying not to smile, when suddenly the door was flung open and a marvellous personage appeared, an old lady, unmistakably a lady, but just as unmistakably a vagrant, with a look upon her face as if all the gayety of the gay city had chosen for a moment to wear the mask of age. A taffeta skirt, intended at the Magasin du Louvre for a petticoat; a lace-trimmed dressing sacque; a long scarf of costly black lace drooping over gray hair and shoulders—with black mitts, made up a costume such as the girl had never seen save in the corn fields of her native land for frightening birds. To Kathleen the bold nose and piercing black eye seemed familiar; a moment more and she recognized the old lady seen the night of her arrival at the book-stall on the quay. "The Morrigu," whispered the Count, and mirth twinkled back from Kathleen's eyes. "Mrs. Faunce," announced Madame. This amazing personage swept a deep, ironic courtesy to her fellow-guests, and those of longer standing bowed in delighted recognition. The humorous curves at the corners of the wrinkled mouth deepened as the old lady took her seat, with quick, satiric greetings for all she knew.

"M. Adolphe, have they hung your pictures at the salon yet? Surely, they would, if they thought as well of them as you and I do."

"Mr. Neulings, I trust you are as modest as ever about being a British subject!"

"M. le Comte Denis François—what is it?—Beauregard, I see that you are again able to conceal your delight in seeing me." The Count, who had met her but once, but who added abhorrence of Mrs. Faunce to his abhorrence of idleness and of Mlle. Vinet, bowed but said nothing. As the keen old eyes swept the dining-room they lighted on Kathleen.

"Who's that?" demanded the newcomer. Madame hastened to explain. "Miss Kathleen Blake?" repeated the old lady. "Surely I thought it was the fairy queen from the Islands of the Blessed." She neglected her soup, and sat with her eyes fixed on Kathleen's face, as if she saw something there that the others did not see.

Now I hold firmly the belief that no gentlewoman can indulge in personalities. The shafts of Mrs. Faunce's wit were as merciless as well aimed, and yet she was a gentlewoman. Perhaps no other human being ever united in herself so many aspects of the impossible. I do not expect you to believe in her; I hardly did myself when I saw her day by day. Even Madame who knew more than the rest of us, frankly admitted that she did not know enough to explain this aged personage, upon whose wrinkled cheeks an air of irresponsibility sat so engagingly.

"She is one mystery," Madame would say, "and is, I know not who. She has known great folk; it is not only in her talk but in her manner, for she has the grand air."

It was rumored in the pension that Mrs. Faunce possessed a title; it was darkly hinted that she carried about her person large sums of money; it was universally admitted that she was quixotically generous. She came and went as she would, no one knew whence or whither, venturing, at seventy, alone across the seas, from Ireland to England, from London to the continent, appearing at unexpected moments at the Hôtel du Lion. Even here she came but to dine, living somewhere on the other side of the river, where she was said to possess a house of her own. Mr. Neulings had always her gracious permission to escort her toward home as far as the end of the bridge

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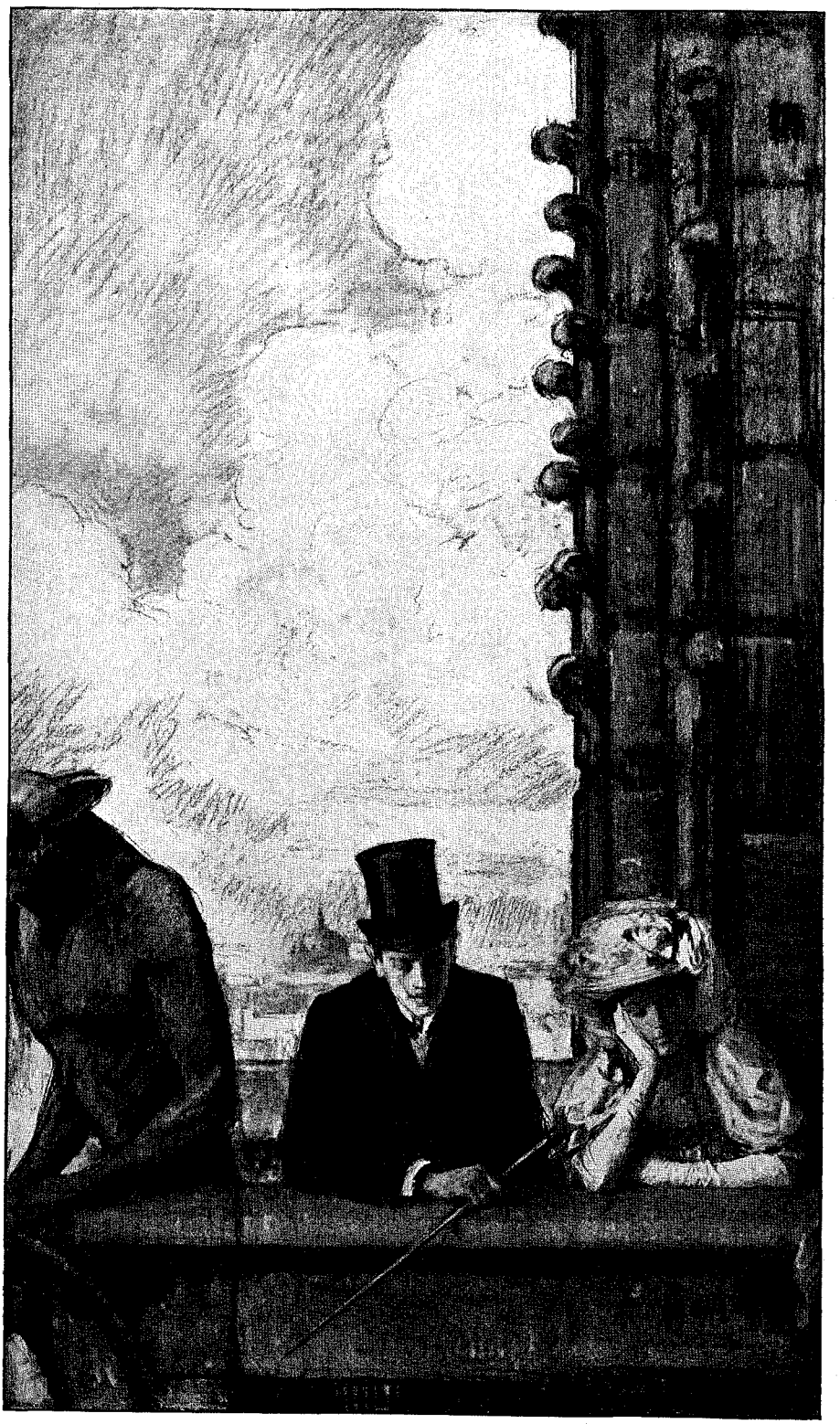

Drawn by F. Walter Taylor.

In silence they watched the golden spring sunshine over gray Paris.—Page 158.

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when the lights shone out after dinner, but here she dismissed him promptly, going back alone to the heart of her mystery.

The changes that the coming of Mrs. Faunce wrought at the Hôtel du Lion were many. From the first she took an absorbing interest in Kathleen, and her eyes, as they rested on the girl's face, were as the eyes of a mother watching her first-born. Daily, as she came back with unwonted persistence, she demanded more and more of the girl's time, and Kathleen, fascinated by a personality so alive with the joy of the open road, gave gladly what she asked.

Meanwhile the Count was sorely lonely. There were no more quiet talks in the salon, for it was invaded every evening by this horrible old personage whose impertinence and quick laughter represented all that he most detested of the personal and familiar.

"Now who would think I had held him on my knee when he was a baby?" she had demanded concerning him one day. "Ah, Monsieur has forgotten!"

Daily he stiffened under the stinging wit, becoming once more the solitary seigneur of the *troisième*. Her tales of the Irish peasantry were supplanting his stories of Breton folk, in spite of his diligent burrowing in learned books; and it was with anguish of spirit that he saw beauty come and go in Kathleen's face at another's touch than his own.

One afternoon the old lady and the girl were in Madame's garden, where a plane tree, a horse chestnut and two pear trees kept watch over rose-bush and ivied walls. It was a sight to see them together, the white head with its covering of rich lace all awry, and the bare head of the young girl seeming darker than ever for the petals of pear blossom that had drifted to it in their fall. The bright old eyes grew tender as they rested there.

"Now tell me more about yourself," begged Mrs. Faunce. "I must know, you see, if you are fit company for me." If she winked I dare not say it, and besides, only Madame's parrot saw.

"There's nothing to tell," said Kathleen. "Except for school I have spent my whole life at Hellespont."

"Then I think the gods and goddesses must have visited you at Hellespont and taught you how to walk," said Mrs. Faunce gallantly. "Ah, but you are Irish, me dear, Irish through and through. 'Tis in the look of you and the smile of you and the sweet ways of you."

From his window *au troisième* the Count, looking down, saw the mitt-clad hand laid affectionately on Kathleen's shoulder, and he scowled. Ah, if the Morrigu would only go away in the likeness of an eel or a gray wolf, and leave alone that dark head which no one ought to touch, no one, save in time, perhaps, one favored person.

Others besides the Count as the days went on noted that the eyes of the old Irish lady were constantly upon Kathleen, watching with delight each turn of her head and each quiver of a smile across her lips. For the first time in the long years of wandering the vagrant heart had come home to rest. Mrs. Faunce began asking the girl's advice about clothing. Might she keep on wearing mitts? Was her head-dress too old-fashioned, and what did Kathleen think of her skirt? What Kathleen thought of her skirt became visible a few days later in the shape of a grand black silk dress made by Madame's modiste. Meekly the old lady began taking off her cap before putting on her bonnet, a custom long foregone. Then, to Madame's great surprise, she, who had been but an occasional guest, demanded a room and stayed on *en pension*. The night when he learned of this the Count Denis François Amédée Beauregard sat long in his dark room considering the possibility of going back to Château Miraban and Mlle. Vinet.

The fondness of the old lady for Kathleen won her to the point of telling the long story of her wanderings. It was when she was a grandmother, she confessed to the girl, that the call of the open road had become irresistible.

"Me husband dead, me daughter married and happy and me but forty-six, I fretted for me freedom."

She had quietly disappeared, and then had followed a life of pleasant wandering from country to country, from town to town. Conventions had slipped from her and she had grown young again.

"From time to time I wrote to them," she said, smiling grimly, "when I was too far away for them to follow, China, maybe, or Japan. 'Twas geography I was studying, me dear. You see, me life had been bounded by the piano stool on the north

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and the French windows on the south, and there were some things I wanted to know: how it is that the river goes, and the way the tides come in. And I've found it out. 'Tis more than one winter I've spent followin' the wild geese south, wild geese and tame," she added thoughtfully. Mr. Neulings, strolling out before dinner, heard the last remark and smiled. He knew, if no one else did, how many times Mrs. Faunce had started for Italy without ever reaching that desired spot. By her own confession she had never been able to get past Monte Carlo.

In the days that followed there was trouble enough at the Hôtel du Lion, though all seemed placid on the outside, and Miss Stevens never dreamed the depth of symbolism in her seventy-fifth fact, announced at luncheon: "The earth moves constantly in its orbit between Venus and Mars." It had come to the point where Cousin Louise and Kathleen but exchanged formal greetings with Count Denis. "Monsieur," Kathleen had asked one day, meeting him at the door of the salon, "have you no more Breton tales for me?" Buoyed up by a stern resolution to forget her, he had bowed formally, regretting in rather icy fashion that his information was exhausted. Mrs. Faunce, who had overheard, smiled with satisfaction. She had seen in the girl's face that which she wanted to see there, for this love story was blossoming for her old age like witch-hazel in the fall. It was on the days when he avoided Kathleen that the Count ceased to be a wandering voice, recounting pleasant things, and became to the girl a dangerously interesting person.

"And all the better if they're none too happy at first," said Mrs. Faunce, nodding sagely to herself. Her satisfaction was not shared by the Count, who found his first step in renunciation a heavy one indeed. He plunged into the Paris streets, took a tram, found his way out to the Bois and walked fiercely up and down past the bench where he had sat one day with Kathleen. They had no feeling, no sentiment, these American women. All that this girl wanted of him was—information.

"I have the misfortune," he wrote in a note book which he drew out of his pocket, "to be the object of interested admiration of the woman I love. She apparently does not know of my existence, being content to know my intellectual quality. This admiration leaves me out in the cold." Then he sensibly tore out the leaf, and burned it at the edge of a lighted match.

Yet his mood changed when Kathleen smiled wistfully upon him; resolution slipped away and he grew kind again. He thought long and deeply about ancient Brittany and Kathleen; he thought long and deeply about modern Brittany and his mother, and the result was that, with all the strength of a resolution reversed to accord with the desire of his heart, he took his destiny into his own hands for good or for ill. Seeking out Cousin Louise he formally begged permission to ask for the hand of Mademoiselle Kathleen, and that lady came out of the interview with a red spot on either cheek. In that it was French she liked it, but in that she had not known what to say she was deeply concerned.

"I told him that Kathleen is poor," she confessed to Mrs. Faunce, to whom she fled for advice. "Her father lost his money shortly before his death."

"What did he say?" asked Mrs. Faunce, pricking up her ears.

"He sighed and half groaned, 'So am I; it is the first time that I have regretted the fact.' You don't think, do you, that he is an adventurer, the kind you read about." A little smile quivered at the corners of Mrs. Faunce's mouth.

"I do not," she answered, "if you care for me opinion."

Two days went by, and nothing happened. The Count's silence almost won the two elderly ladies to the conclusion that the confession of poverty had discouraged him. Mrs. Faunce was not to be daunted, however, and she summoned Kathleen to her.

"Kathleen, me beauty," she demanded, "would you do something for an old woman that loves you dearly?"

"That depends entirely upon the old woman," said the girl.

"'Tis merely I'm thinking of adopting you, but on one condition only: that you let me give you your marriage *dot*. Could you take a present, me dear?"

"Of money? No," she answered gently. "Besides, I'm not thinking of marrying."

"If you're not, others are," said Mrs. Faunce darkly. "Oh, the independence of

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them when they are born on the other side of the water!

That evening the salon was very gay, while the quivering old voice of Mrs. Faunce trilled forth "The Last Rose of Summer," lingering long over

All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone

and Cousin Louise rendered "Annie Laurie." The young ladies of the pension, absorbed in their careers and without parlor accomplishments, sat silent night after night, while the old ladies graciously entertained the company with tremulous voices and withered fingers on the keys. There was a delicate rivalry between the two, shown in mutual compliments and tactful encores, and no touch of ill humor ever appeared, save when one was trying to convict the other of remembering farther back than she. This special evening shone out long afterward in the annals of the Hôtel du Lion for the sparkling of Mrs. Faunce's wit, and the girlish gayety of Cousin Louise. The Count came in late, and presently found himself sitting by Mrs. Faunce.

"Ah, but the young people nowadays have no poetry in them!" exploded the old lady suddenly. "There's no such thing as true love any more. Once there was romance in the young, and devotion; now 'tis all money and bargaining when two of them marry. All mercenary, all," she insisted, "especially Frenchmen!"

"Did you know," Miss Stevens was informing Mr. Neulings—it was her eightieth fact—"that the earth is all hot inside and is slowly cooling off?"

Then Mrs. Faunce turned upon the Count with a wicked twinkle:

And if thou dost not love me
Why dost thou come so near?

she sang softly and sentimentally. A little smile quivered over the grave face, and the old lady knew that her hour of triumph had come. Unbending sufficiently to talk with her, the young man left the salon with the conviction that this was indeed a brilliant woman, though undeniably odd. This was but the beginning of conquest. As the days passed Mrs. Faunce found many ways of monopolizing him. She wheedled, she coaxed, she flattered, but what do I know of the way of an Irishwoman with a man? Whatever purpose she had in mind she concealed under clever discussion of literature and of politics, and he found, what she had intended him to know, that she had held a part in London and in Parisian society a generation ago, and knew minute peculiarities of some of his kinsfolk. The growing mystery of the old lady fascinated him. It was the Count now who escorted her on her walks; his subjugation was complete.

"He's tame enough to eat out of me hand," said Mrs. Faunce, smiling sardonically.

If her purpose was to gain an intimacy that would warrant urging him in his wooing, she was mistaken in thinking that he needed prodding from her. Like many another worldly wise person she knew mankind in general so well that she was apt to be mistaken in judging any particular case. The Count was but waiting for a moment when she was not at his elbow to speak to Kathleen, and it was not until the two were together one day on one of the towers of Notre Dame that the moment came. Fortunately the height had been too great for Cousin Louise and Mrs. Faunce. The cries and the swift stir of the city drifted up to them, with fragrance of flower and of leaf, and there was a sound of bird wings in the air, as the two stood high among the gray gargoyles.

"Mademoiselle Kathleen," said the Count softly, and, as the girl turned toward him, it seemed as if he saw all the flickering leaf shadows of the forest of Broceliande in her gray eyes: "Mademoiselle Kathleen, it is permitted to me to tell you that I love you."

Through the hidden tenderness of her face crept a look half of surprise and half of fear, and then of passionate welcome.

"But I thought it was Cousin Louise you cared for," she stammered, and they laughed together, while the doves raised their heads to listen.

"So I do," he answered gallantly, "but after a different fashion. I love you both, Mademoiselle, but it is you whom I have the honor to ask to be my wife."

It was characteristic of the intercourse between the two that she gave him no answer. Somewhere, long ago, in the green shades of the Celtic forests, that yes had been spoken. In silence they watched the golden spring sunshine over gray Paris,

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sharing swift thrills of feeling, new and sweet. When they came down the long and winding way, Cousin Louise merely smiled in wonted fashion, but Mrs. Faunce gathered Kathleen to her arms and kissed her, with tears of joy trickling down her gay old face.

Now all was peace for a few days at the Hôtel du Lion. Madame was taken into the confidence of those who knew, and she smiled benignly. For the lovers there was one quiet afternoon with Cousin Louise in the Cluny garden, where the three sat on an old stone bench, the marbles about them seeming but overhanging leaves carved to immortality. There were quiet walks with Mrs. Faunce along the quays by the old book-stalls, and across the river at twilight when the lights came out on bridge and shore. The little urban idyl was even as the blossoming of the first trees, as lovely as those in old Celtic story, against the stone walls of the garden.

One day there was an air of trouble brewing. A great thunder storm darkened the air, and, in the tense moment that comes before the breaking of the thunder, a carriage drove up at the door of the Hôtel du Lion, a carriage whose quiet elegance was new to the Rue de Vannes. The coat of arms upon the door, the disdainful coachman, the superb manner of the lady who descended with an air of command that seemed to rebuke the thunder, were enough to overwhelm the modest establishment. Even Madame herself was agitated by the message she sent up to the Count. The Countess, his mother, was waiting for him in the salon. The storm broke. The disdainful coachman found shelter for himself and his horses. The Count had found shelter nowhere, and perhaps the lightning that struck in the salon was all the more deadly in that it made no noise. From behind drawn shades Mrs. Faunce watched the ending of the interview, the defiant deference with which the Count put his mother into the carriage, the high disdain of that personage as she took her seat.

"An obstinate young man," said Mrs. Faunce, smiling, and Mrs. Faunce ought to know. Through Cousin Louise she learned that night that Count Denis had not only made known to his mother his determination to persist in the study of medicine with a view to practising the same, but had confessed to her his engagement to a penniless American girl, who was as beautiful as she was unworldly.

"He is completely used up by the interview," said Cousin Louise anxiously. "For days I have seen that he was worrying." Mrs. Faunce went into a brown study.

"I must go about me business," she said, shaking her head until her gray curls trembled. "The children will have nothing to start life on if I do not."

"You have never told me your father's name, child, nor where he came from," she said abruptly, the next day.

"His name was John Lane Blake," answered the girl. "He came from Ireland when he was a young man, after some trouble with his family. They were gentlefolk, and they lived at Ralshannon on the west coast.

The old lady gave a start and a queer look came into her face.

"Did he ever speak of his mother, me dear?" she asked sharply.

"Not that I remember. There had been bitter trouble, and we knew that he was happier if we did not ask."

"Maybe your Cousin Louise would know about it?" queried Mrs. Faunce anxiously, but Kathleen shook her head.

"Cousin Louise never saw my father. Even my mother knew no more, for I used to ask her. We led a lonely life. The ways of the new country did not suit my father, for he was an aristocrat to his finger tips," but she stopped for she saw that Mrs. Faunce was not listening.

"May I see his photograph, me dear?"

Kathleen went to her room for it, and watched in wonder to see the old lady's excitement as she took it. Her hands were shaking now in unison with her head.

"Ah, but he loved his joke, and was tender-hearted as yourself," she exclaimed.

"More so," answered Kathleen softly.

"Had he brothers and sisters?"

"One sister only, I believe," said the girl. She marvelled at the old lady's persistence, and the thought of it followed her as she went out into the garden, but she forgot straightway as she met Count Denis.

"You come to me like an other-world maiden with a blossoming branch in your hand," he said, reaching out for the spray of roses that she carried.

"Please tell me," begged Kathleen.

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"Tell you what?"

"Tell me what troubles you. For two whole days you have looked as if you were under an enchantment of sadness. Does your mother know, and does she care?"

"She knows—and she cares. But it shall make no difference. Our life is our own life and we must live it."

"But oh!" said Kathleen, in deep trouble, "I cannot make her unhappy."

"Kathleen," said the Count, taking her hands in his own, "Kathleen, it was made long ago in the Druid forest, this love of ours, and we cannot change it if we would, and will not, though we may wait for years."

Early the next morning Kathleen came wandering into the salon. Why so mysterious a summons from one whom she saw daily? There was an unwonted flush on Mrs. Faunce's cheek, an unwonted dignity on her brow, an unwonted lace scarf, surplice fashion, about her neck. Enthroned upon the sofa she waited for the girl's approach. Kathleen's smile was her only question.

"Sit down, child," commanded Mrs. Faunce. The girl obeyed. "Now I have something to tell you."

"Something nice?"

"That is for you to say," answered the old lady solemnly. "My dear, I am your grandmother."

"My adopted grandmother," corrected Kathleen, patting the wrinkled hand.

"No, no, me darlin'!" cried the old lady tremulously. "Your grandmother born."

"But how?" stammered the girl.

"By being your father's mother." Mrs. Faunce was half in tears; Kathleen had grasped both her hands, while amazement struggled with a desire to laugh.

"'Twas me boy John that begot you. I sent him from home when he was but eighteen. He defied me, mind you, and he went never to come back. 'Twas his cursed pride; he got it from me, God forgive him!"

Kathleen, half laughing and half crying too, bent and kissed Mrs. Faunce's forehead. If this unprecedented old lady with her grand air sat upright on the sofa and said: "I am your grandmother!" could you deny it, if you had no proof? And was it more odd than the rest of the happenings in this wonderful Paris?

"Are you really not joking?" asked Kathleen, as she sat down by the old lady's side.

"Upon me honor as a gentlewoman, no," was the answer. "'Tis false pride has kept me from makin' meself known before. Now that I know that you are betrothed I feel that you should have your own kith and kin near. And it's a hard time you'll have, me young lady, to escape your father's inheritance that's been lying in the London and County Bank all this time and rolling up for your *dot*. But tell me first: do you love this man?"

"'To the very white of truth,'" quoted the girl.

"Now that's a fine saying; and did you think of it yourself?"

"No, no, no," said Kathleen with a laugh. "A better than I thought of it long ago. But, grandmother, tell me what made you run away from home?"

"Ay, what?" mused the old lady.

"Perhaps it was to find my father?"

"Perhaps it was," twinkled Mrs. Faunce.

The old lady chose her own moment for the announcement of the relationship. It was in the salon after dinner, and she had just finished rendering, with much feeling, "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls." She rose, made a profound courtesy, and laid her hand on Kathleen's shoulder.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she remarked, "a pleasing discovery has been made, and it gives me joy to make known to you that I find this young lady is me own grandchild, sole daughter of me son John, who left home at eighteen in consequence of a quarrel with his mother."

The handkerchief held to her eyes was bordered, as Miss Stevens noted, with finest old lace. It was only Mr. Neulings who fancied he caught at one corner the twinkle of a wicked old eye watching the effect. The Count started, looked uncomfortable, and waited for the rest. Mrs. Faunce gathered her granddaughter unto her and sat down on the sofa.

"Furthermore," she added, "it is but fair that I should tell you who I am meself. Me maiden name was Denleigh, Mary Elizabeth Denleigh, third daughter of Sir Robert Denleigh of Ralshannon, Ireland. Consequently this little girl has more right to a bit of pride in her birth than she seems to know."

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It was the supreme moment in the history of the Hôtel du Lion. If news had come that Paris had again been invested by the Germans, or if it had been Miss Stevens's privilege to announce that Uranus and the earth had collided, there could hardly have been greater excitement. The guests chattered in corners, the parrot chattered in his cage; M. Mostet remarked that he had always said that Miss Blake looked as if she might be even an earl's granddaughter. Only Mr. Neulings was sceptical.

"Did the recognition come about by means of a strawberry mark?" he asked.

"Not on Kathleen, me dear, but her father. 'Twas a peculiar mole at the right of his nose. I knew his picture at once, though he was older and had changed his name."

"It is very odd," mused Mr. Neulings. "You have not seemed to care for your other grandchildren as you do for Miss Blake." The old lady glared at him.

"'Twas because me daughter married an Englishman," she flashed back, "and they are English through and through."

In the days that followed, the Count, though chastened and changed, was obviously uneasy. The sensational recognition was by no means to his taste. Moreover, looking at his new friend and ally, Mrs. Faunce, he realized that his mother would have one more obstacle to face, and his uneasiness was not dissipated by the new-found grandmother's assurances that Kathleen would have a magnificent dowry. He had painful pictures of Mrs. Faunce in the salon at Château Miraban. What would Michette, the great angora cat, think of her? Yet a brief meeting with Kathleen would set his fears at rest, for there was no doubt that Michette would approve of her. In one of these interviews Kathleen learned that he had written to his mother, telling of his determination to persist, and asking for her blessing; in another, that he was melancholy because he had not heard from her; in another, that he was still more sad because he had heard. The look upon his face shadowed the glory of the girl's Paris, and she heroically thought of disappearing with Cousin Louise.

"But no, no, no," she said, pacing the great Pont des Arts in the warm noonday and watching the swirling water hurry on its way. "Good could not come from crushing so great a joy."

And now came a letter every day from the Countess to her son, full of questioning. Who was Miss Blake? How was it possible that she was the granddaughter of Sir Robert Denleigh? If Denis really persisted, she, his mother, would come to Paris again to see this young lady and beg her to change her mind, but it would not be possible for several weeks, as there were guests at Château Miraban. It was when this message came that Mrs. Faunce prepared for her grand *coup*.

"Kathleen," she said, "it is but right that a daughter of your father's race should be properly housed to meet the mother of her *fiancé*. I must make ready me hotel in the Rue d'Hazard."

"But," remonstrated Kathleen. Mrs. Faunce waved her hand in her grand manner.

"Not a word! 'Tis me pleasure, and 'tis no obligation. Am I not meself in debt to me neglected son?"

That afternoon Mrs. Faunce went away. No, nobody should come with her. There was a competent caretaker in her house, and she wished no one to see it until it was quite in order. She even refused to tell the hour of her going, and, when no one was watching, slipped down the busy street alone, and hailed a cab.

That night her house in the Rue d'Hazard knew her not, but the Roman express bore southward a lady of brilliant eyes and indomitable chin, an old, old lady in a black mantilla, with an ancient bonnet above her cap of costly lace, which she had forgotten to remove. All her vagrant habits were strong upon her now. The next morning, the same lady in the same attire stood at a roulette table in a gaudy hall at Monte Carlo, watching eagerly the fortune of the coin that she had staked. Many an anxious gambler stopped to look at the intent aged face, shadowed by reverend gray hair, and wondered what stake in life could rouse so ardent a hope in one so old. You must imagine it for yourself, the croupier's cry, the piles of gold, the agitated faces. I cannot describe it, for I have never been there, but I know that Mrs. Faunce, when she went away, swept into her black bag a pile of gold pieces that made it heavy to carry. Luck had come to her for the first time.

"Enough to go to Italy," she said, look-

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ing wistfully southward, but she did not go to Italy.

Two days later, while the lovers with Cousin Louise were having an idyllic afternoon at Fontainebleau, a gray stone house, number 71, in the Rue d'Hazard, was opened, and the unwonted sight of windows a-washing roused the baker's boy to speechless astonishment. Not only windows, but doors were scrubbed; not only doors, but front steps; and cobwebs that stretched from threshold to lintel were ruthlessly torn down. The baker's boy knew nothing of the inside, where the paper hung loose from the wall in long shreds, and the dust of forty years lay on the linen swathings of the furniture. Save for the rooms occupied by the old caretaker and his wife and the one Mrs. Faunce used in her Paris visits, the house had not been opened since the days when Sir Robert had been used to come.

The re-papering was swift, thanks to Monte Carlo gold; scrubbing took but a little while, for the owner summoned, no one knows whence, a small army of charwomen. The old furniture, relieved of its dusky coverings and polished up a bit, gave a look of time-honored elegance to the lofty rooms. There must be fresh curtains in the salon, said Mrs. Faunce, weighing her bag of gold pieces anxiously, but rep was costly. When all was finished, she walked through the house with deep satisfaction. The rich but sober tints, the long, subdued draperies that graced the windows, that bare elegance which only French rooms have, pleased the fundamentally good taste of the owner. It was Kathleen's room that gave her the deepest joy. Windows and dressing table were all in white, so the carpet, save for delicate touches of green.

"Ah, but the darling will like it," she murmured, patting the counterpane.

A tall palm and some orchids for the salon; a crate of rare old china unpacked in the basement; a man and a maid, appropriately uniformed, added to the domestic force, and the arrangements for winning over the Countess Beauregard were complete. To bring Kathleen and Cousin Louise in triumph across the river and install them in the newly fitted house was an easy matter, after the hard work of the last two weeks. If the girl was a bit bewildered and quiet, Cousin Louise, in her rapturous exclamations, more than made up for this. To her it was a veritable fairy story, the first in which she had ever figured. It was when Kathleen was showing her lover the house arrayed in her honor that the full realization came to her of all that this fantastic godmother had wrought, and tears came to her eyes as she flung her arms about the old lady's neck and kissed her.

When the Countess Beauregard finally arrived, escorted by an exquisitely polite but most anxious son, that wonderful old lady, Mrs. Faunce, having passed through the crucible, had emerged, spotless, shining, with no marks of her years of vagrancy upon her save in an occasional look of happy recklessness. In an old silk gown from one of the chests upstairs, happily in a fashion that was now all the rage in Paris, and with some choice lace about her neck, she was more *grande dame* than ever. Giving an amused glance now and then out of the tail of her eye at the young Count, who was every moment becoming more reassured about the angora cat, she kept a repose of manner worthy of her long descent. Simple Kathleen and Cousin Louise, taking their tone from her, became as denizens of the great world, and guest and hostess were stately and gracious together. The Countess Beauregard, forgetting her stern purpose, was completely won. What the new alliance lacked in gold, she was convinced, it made up in blood. When she went she kissed Kathleen upon her flushing cheek, and called her *ma chère fille*. A bit of business conversation took place between the Countess and Mrs. Faunce, and the latter stated with pride the very considerable sum that would make up her granddaughter's *dot*.

That night, in her own bare room, furnished with a white iron bedstead, one chair, and a bureau, Mrs. Faunce looked cautiously about her, and then locked the door. From her black bag she took the draft that represented half her winnings at Monte Carlo, and the gold pieces that remained; from pockets in her skirt and underskirt roll after roll of bills, American greenbacks of large denominations, and English bank-notes; the lining of her mantilla yielded more. She piled them up upon the bed and counted.

"'Tis not enough," she muttered. "I said two hundred thousand francs."

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From the innermost lining of her gown she extracted a jewelled brooch, in the centre of which a beautiful ruby glowed. At this she looked long and fixedly.

"'Twas his gift on our wedding day, but it will be good for twenty thousand francs, and I would like to have little Kathleen as happy as we were."

The sum made up of lucky finds in Mrs. Faunce's clothing, of the sale of the ruby, and a half dozen other jewels, was duly settled upon Kathleen, and the result made known to the Countess Beauregard, together with a strong statement of the advisability of an early wedding. Mrs. Faunce bore as best she might the life of calls and of shopping that followed. Sometimes Kathleen found her leaning out of a window, drawing great, deep breaths as if an imprisoned animal had won an unexpected bit of air. When the girl laid her arm across the old lady's shoulders and said:

"You will always stay with us, won't you, grandmother?" she marvelled at the look of terror in the bright old eyes. It was as if some one had uttered a threat that might come true.

When the trousseau was all ready, and the farewells had been said at the Hôtel du Lion, there was a quiet wedding in the Rue d'Hazard, the English clergyman of St. Agnes's officiating. A smiling bridegroom looked from the radiant face of his bride to the contented face of his mother, and wondered if this happiness could indeed he his. Then he squared his shoulders and drew a deep breath of satisfaction in the thought of the long days of hard work to come. Mrs. Faunce presided with royal dignity, but, when all was over and the guests were gone, Kathleen found a note saying that her grandmother had been unexpectedly called away, but she left her blessing and good wishes for the happiest of honeymoons in the old house. Long searching failed to find her. To what far shore she had gone to recoup herself for lost time, or lost money, none could tell.

That evening, while Kathleen and her lover leaned out of the window of their darkened drawing-room, watching from their quiet haven the life and stir of the streets, there was an unwonted hush at the Hôtel du Lion in the Rue de Vannes. Even the parrot was melancholy; M. Mostet was all in black; and Madame forgot to smile as Mr. Neulings strolled nonchalantly toward the office.

"It was unusual generosity on the old lady's part," he commented. "I do not doubt that she has stripped herself of her last penny, but perhaps it was only natural. Miss Blake was her granddaughter."

Madame's eyebrows were sceptically lifted.

"*Pensez-vous cela?*" she asked. "*Pas moi!*"

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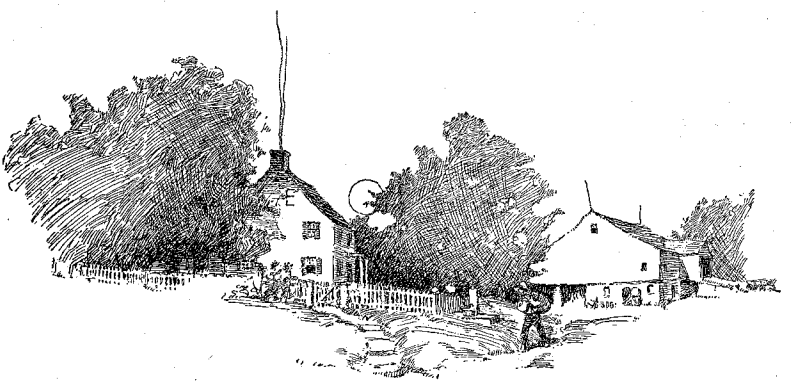
BACK TO THE FARM

By Martha Gilbert Dickinson Bianchi

ILLUSTRATIONS BY N. C. WYETH

BACK to the farm!
Where the bob-white still is calling
As in remembered dawnings when youth and I were boys,
Driving the cattle where the meadow brook is brawling
Her immemorial wandering fears and joys!

Home to the farm for the deep green calms of summer,
Life of the open furrow, life of the waving grain—
Leaving the painted world of masquerade and mummer
Just for the sense of earth and ripening again.



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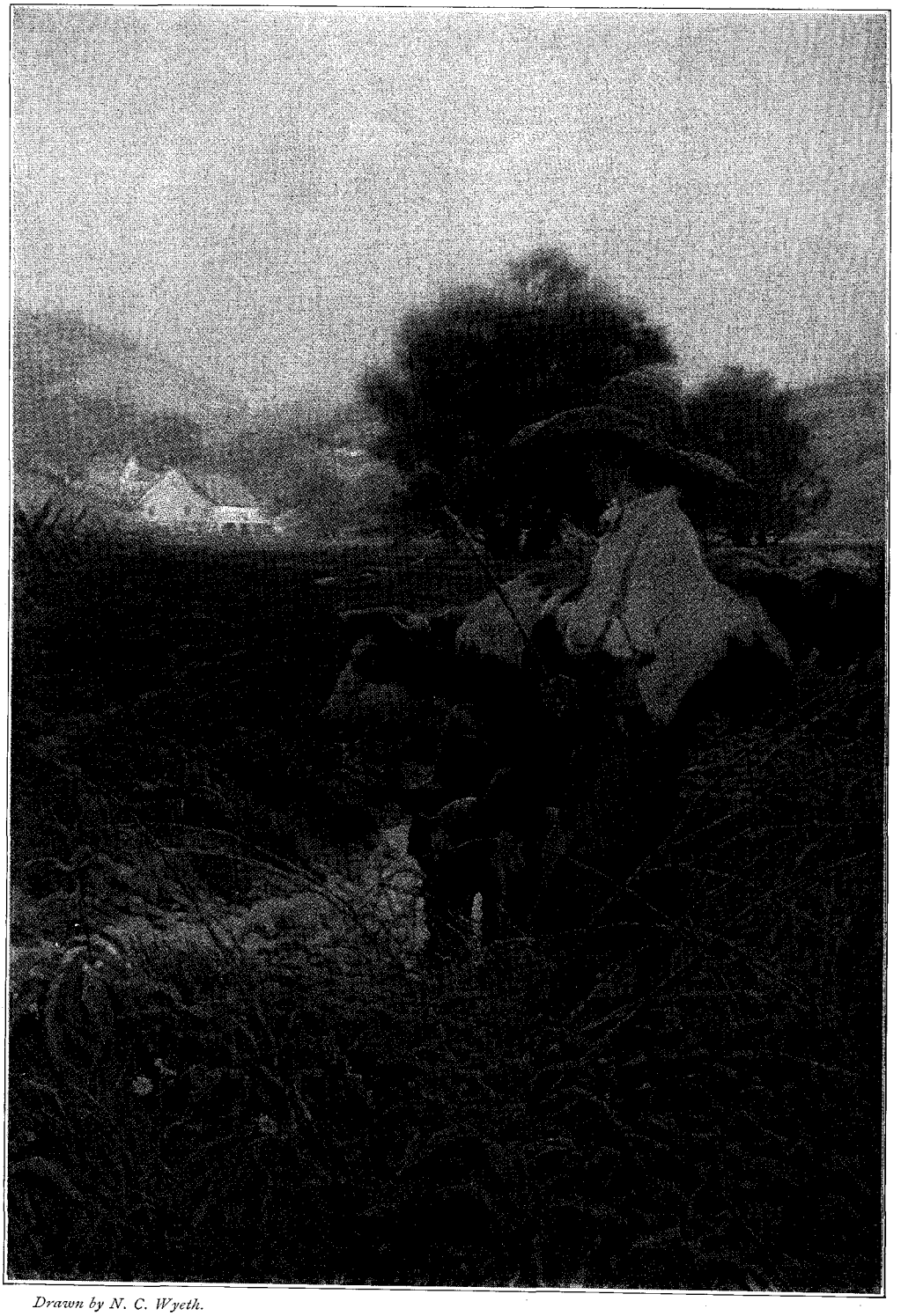

Drawn by N. C. Wyeth.

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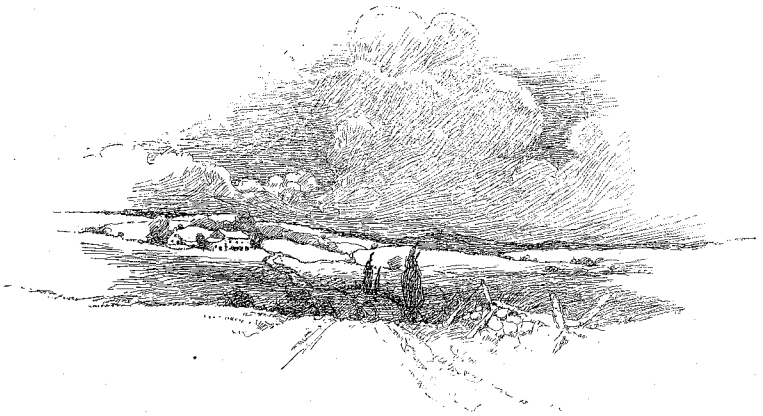

Down in the hayfield where scythes glint through the clover;
  Lusty blood a-throbbing in the splendor of the noon—
Lying 'mid the haycocks as castling clouds pass over,
  Hearing insect lovers a-piping out of tune.

Caught in the spell of old kitchen-garden savors—
  With luscious lines retreating to hills of musky corn,
And clambering grapes that spill their clustering flavors—
  Each in fragrant season filling Plenty's golden horn.

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Drawn by N. C. Wyeth.

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Off to the wood lot where brier bloom runs riot
And wary forest creature no hunter's snare deceives,
Virgin growth beguiling the solemn-hearted quiet
With songs of winter fires a-ripple through the leaves.

Up to the bars in the twilight's soft reaction—
Winding through the ferny lane to barns of stooping eaves
Welcoming at nightfall to simple satisfaction,
When the reeling swallow her dusky pattern weaves.

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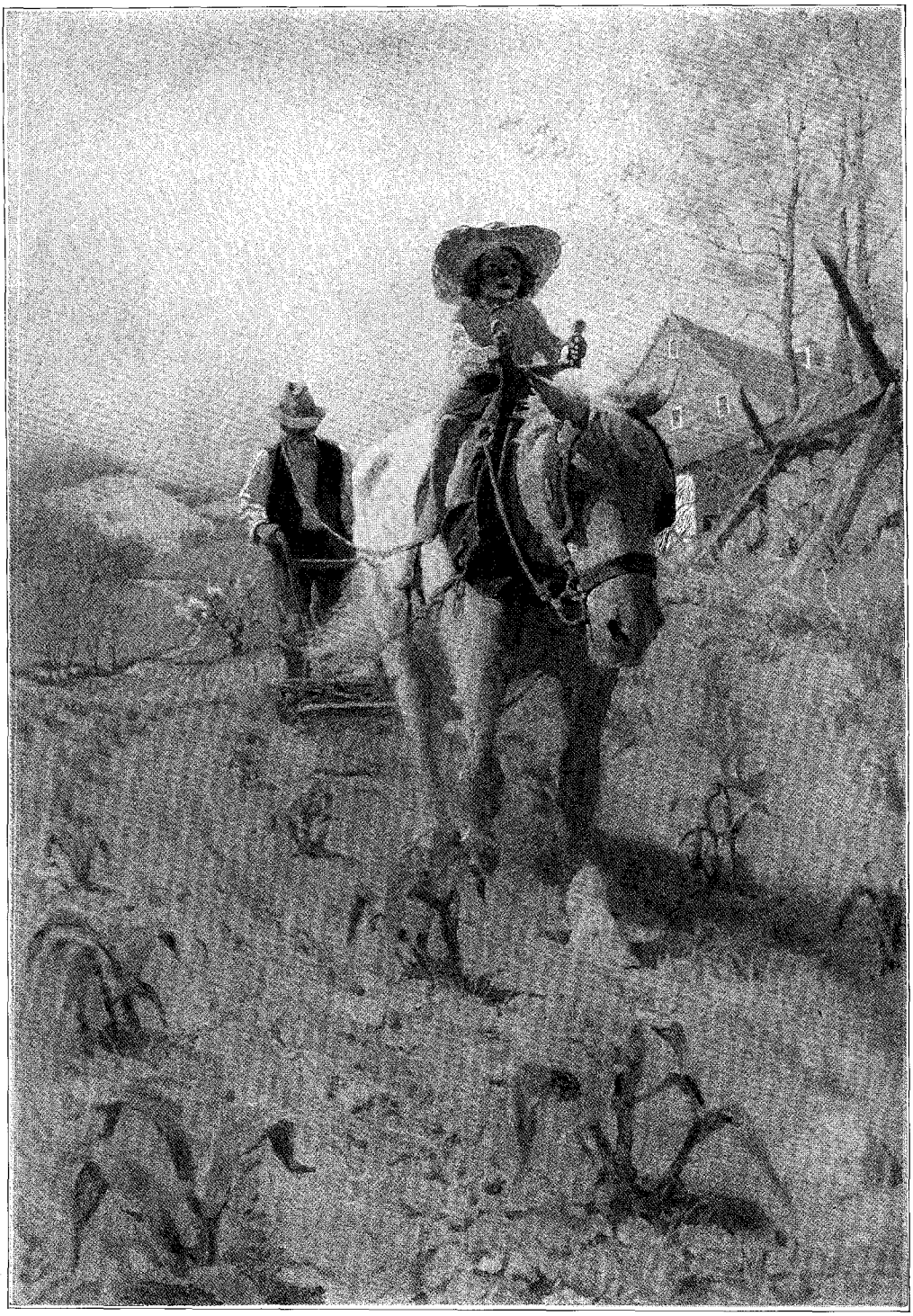

Drawn by N. C. Wyeth.

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Out in the dews with the spider at his shuttle—
In that half-dreaming hour that awakes the whippoorwill
And sets the nighthawk darting sinister and subtle,
E'er the full moon complacent loiters o'er the hill.

Back to the farm!
With the friendly brute for neighbor,
Where youth and Nature beckon, the tryst who would not keep?
Back to the luxury of rest that follows labor,
Back to the primal joys of hunger and of sleep!

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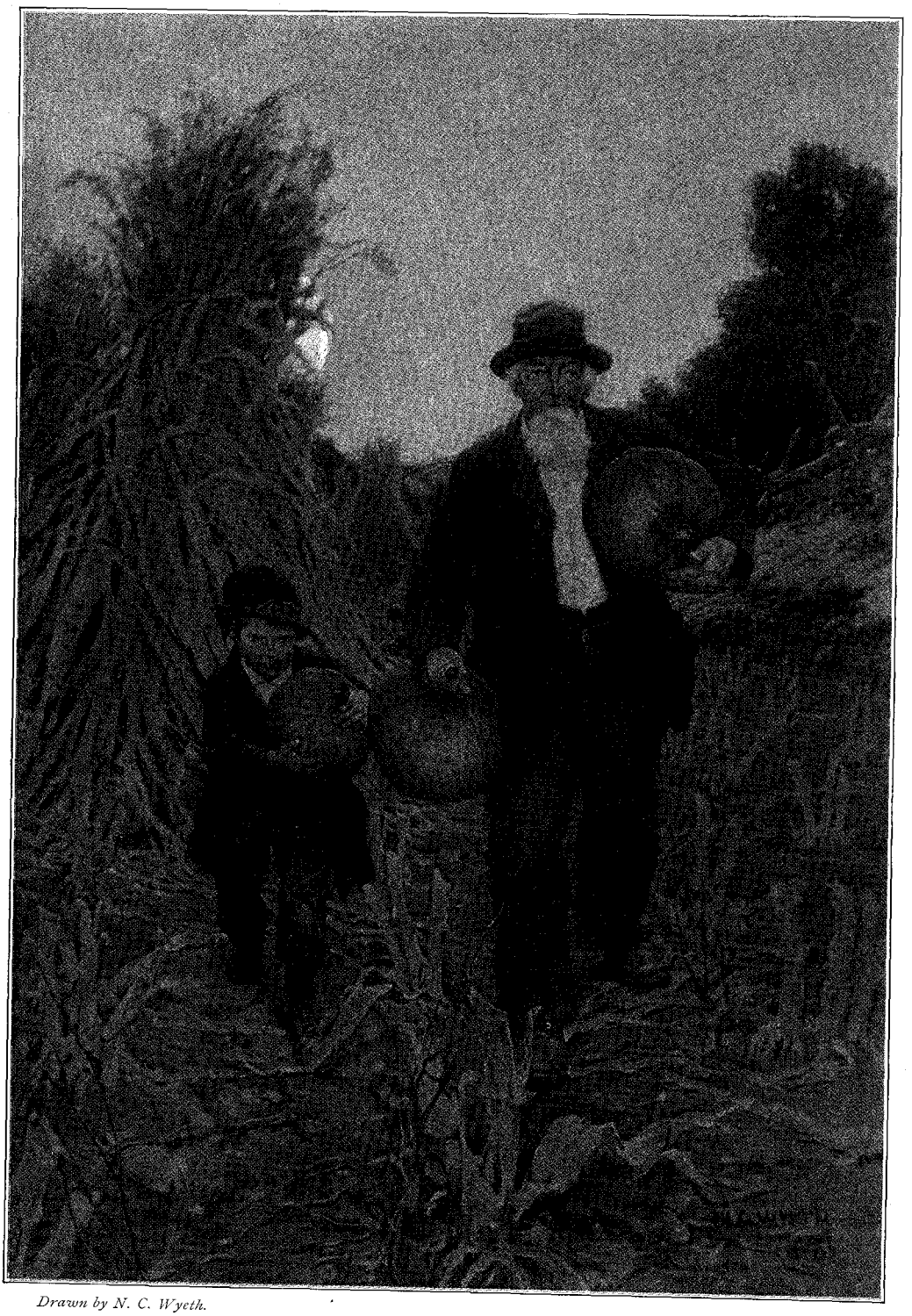

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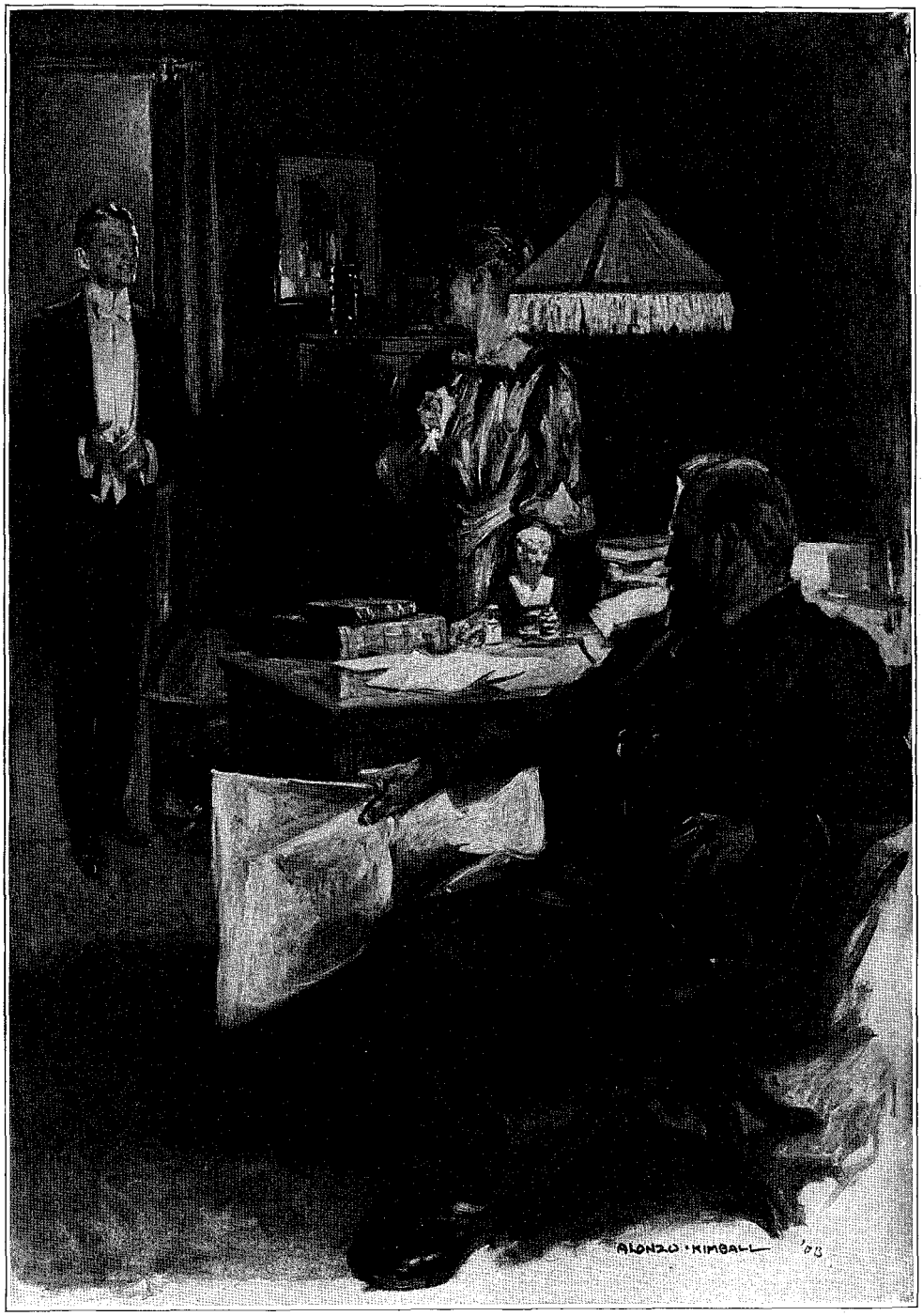

Drawn by Alonzo Kimball.

The door opened and Dawnish stood there.—Page 181.

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THE PRETEXT

By Edith Wharton

ILLUSTRATION BY ALONZO KIMBALL

I

MRS. RANSOM, when the front door had closed on her visitor, passed with a spring from the drawing-room to the narrow hall, and thence up the narrow stairs to her bedroom.

Though slender, and still light of foot, she did not always move so quickly: hitherto, in her life, there had not been much to hurry for, save the recurring domestic tasks that compel haste without fostering elasticity; but some impetus of youth revived, communicated to her by her talk with Guy Dawnish, now found expression in her girlish flight upstairs, her girlish impatience to bolt herself into her room with her throbs and her blushes.

Her blushes? Was she really blushing?

She approached the cramped "Colonial" mirror above her plain prim dressing-table: just such a meagre concession to the weakness of the flesh as every old-fashioned house in Wentworth counted among its heirlooms. The face reflected in this unflattering surface—for even the mirrors of Wentworth erred on the side of depreciation—did not seem, at first sight, a suitable theatre for the display of the tenderer emotions, and its owner blushed more deeply as the fact was forced upon her.

Her fair hair had grown too thin—it no longer quite hid the blue veins in her candid forehead—a forehead that one seemed to see turned toward professorial desks, in large bare halls where a snowy winter light fell uncompromisingly on rows of "thoughtful women." Her mouth was thin, too, and a little strained; her lips were too pale; and there were lines in the corners of her eyes. It was a face which had grown middle-aged while it waited for the joys of youth.

Well—but if she could still blush? Instinctively she drew back a little, so that her scrutiny became less microscopic, and the pretty lingering pink threw a veil over her pallor, the hollows in her temples, the faint wrinkles of inexperience about her lips and eyes. How a little colour helped! It made her eyes so deep and shining. She saw now why bad women rouged. . . . Her redness deepened at the thought.

But suddenly she noticed for the first time that the collar of her dress was cut too low. It showed the shrunken lines of the throat. She rummaged feverishly in a tidy scentless drawer, and snatching out a bit of black velvet, bound it about her neck. Yes—that was better. It gave her the relief she needed. Relief—contrast—that was it! She had never had any, either in her appearance or in her setting. She was as flat as the pattern of the wall-paper—and so was her life. And all the people about her had the same look. Wentworth was the kind of place where husbands and wives gradually grew to resemble each other—one or two of her friends, she remembered, had told her lately that she and Ransom were beginning to look alike. . . .

But why had she always, so tamely, allowed her aspect to conform to her situation? Perhaps a gayer exterior would have provoked a brighter fate. Even now—she turned back to the glass, loosened the tight strands of hair above her brow, ran the fine end of the comb under them with a rapid frizzing motion, and then disposed them, more lightly and amply, above her eager face. Yes—it was really better; it made a difference. She smiled at herself with a timid coquetry, and her lips seemed rosier as she smiled. Then she laid down the comb and the smile faded. It made a difference, certainly—but was it right to try to make one's hair look thicker and wavier than it really was? Between that and rouging the ethical line seemed almost impalpable, and the spectre of her rigid New England ancestry rose reprovingly before her. She was sure that none of her grandmothers had ever simulated a curl or encouraged a blush.

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A blush, indeed! What had any of them ever had to blush for in all their frozen lives? And what, in Heaven's name, had she? She sat down in the stiff mahogany rocking-chair beside her work-table and tried to collect herself. From childhood she had been taught to "collect herself"—but never before had her small sensations and aspirations been so widely scattered, diffused over so vague and uncharted an expanse. Hitherto they had lain in neatly sorted and easily accessible bundles on the high shelves of a perfectly ordered moral consciousness. And now—now that for the first time they *needed* collecting—now that the little winged and scattered bits of self were dancing madly down the vagrant winds of fancy, she knew no spell to call them to the fold again. The best way, no doubt—if only her bewilderment permitted—was to go back to the beginning—the beginning, at least, of to-day's visit—to recapitulate, word for word and look for look. . . .

She clasped her hands on the arms of the chair, checked its swaying with a firm thrust of her foot, and fixed her eyes upon the inward vision. . . .

To begin with, what had made to-day's visit so different from the others? It became suddenly vivid to her that there had been many, almost daily, others, since Guy Dawnish's coming to Wentworth. Even the previous winter—the winter of his arrival from England—his visits had been numerous enough to make Wentworth aware that—very naturally—Mrs. Ransom was "looking after" the stray young Englishman committed to her husband's care by an eminent Q. C. whom the Ransoms had known on one of their brief London visits, and with whom Ransom had since maintained professional relations. All this was in the natural order of things, as sanctioned by the social code of Wentworth. Every one was kind to Guy Dawnish—some rather importunately so, as Margaret Ransom had smiled to observe—but it was recognized as fitting that she should be kindest, since he was in a sense her property, since his people in England, by profusely acknowledging her kindness, had given it the domestic sanction without which, to Wentworth, any social relation between the sexes remained unhallowed and to be viewed askance. Yes! And even this second winter, when the visits had become so much more frequent, so admitted a part of the day's routine, there had not been, from any one, a hint of surprise or of conjecture. . . .

Mrs. Ransom smiled with a faint bitterness. She was protected by her age, no doubt—her age and her past, and the image her mirror gave back to her. . . .

Her door-handle turned suddenly, and the bolt's resistance was met by an impatient knock.

"Margaret!"

She started up, her brightness fading, and unbolted the door to admit her husband.

"Why are you locked in? Why, you're not dressed yet!" he exclaimed.

It was possible for Ransom to reach his dressing-room by a slight circuit through the passage; but it was characteristic of the relentless domesticity of their relation that he chose, as a matter of course, the directer way through his wife's bedroom. She had never before been disturbed by this practice, which she accepted as inevitable, but had merely adapted her own habits to it, delaying her hasty toilet till he was safely in his room, or completing it before she heard his step on the stair; since a scrupulous traditional prudery had miraculously survived this massacre of all the privacies.

"Oh, I shan't dress this evening—I shall just have some tea in the library after you've gone," she answered absently. "Your things are laid out," she added, rousing herself.

He looked surprised. "The dinner's at seven. I suppose the speeches will begin at nine. I thought you were coming to hear them."

She wavered. "I don't know. I think not. Mrs. Sperry's ill, and I've no one else to go with."

He glanced at his watch. "Why not get hold of Dawnish? Wasn't he here just now? Why didn't you ask him?"

She turned toward her dressing-table, and straightened the comb and brush with a nervous hand. Her husband had given her, that morning, two tickets for the ladies' gallery in Hamblin Hall, where the great public dinner of the evening was to take place—a banquet offered by the faculty of Wentworth to visitors of aca-

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demic eminence—and she had meant to ask Dawnish to go with her: it had seemed the most natural thing to do, till the end of his visit came, and then, after all, she had not spoken. . . .

"It's too late now," she murmured, bending over her pin cushion.

"Too late? Not if you telephone him."

Her husband came toward her, and she turned quickly to face him, lest he should suspect her of trying to avoid his eye. To what duplicity was she already committed!

Ransom laid a friendly hand on her arm: "Come along, Margaret. You know I speak for the bar." She was aware, in his voice, of a little note of surprise at his having to remind her of this.

"Oh, yes. I meant to go, of course——"

"Well, then—" He opened his dressing-room door, and caught a glimpse of the retreating house-maid's skirt. "Here's Maria now. Maria! Call up Mr. Dawnish—at Mrs. Creswell's, you know. Tell him Mrs. Ransom wants him to go with her to hear the speeches this evening—the *speeches*, you understand?—and he's to call for her at a quarter before nine."

Margaret heard the Irish "Yessir" on the stairs, and stood motionless, while her husband added loudly: "And bring me some towels when you come up." Then he turned back into his wife's room.

"Why, it would be a thousand pities for Guy to miss this. He's so interested in the way we do things over here—and I don't know that he's ever heard me speak in public." Again the slight note of fatuity! Was it possible that Ransom was a fatuous man?

He paused in front of her, his short-sighted unobservant glance concentrating itself unexpectedly on her face.

"You're not going like that, are you?" he asked, with glaring eye-glasses.

"Like what?" she faltered, lifting a conscious hand to the velvet at her throat.

"With your hair in such a fearful mess. Have you been shampooing it? You look like the Brant girl at the end of a tennis-match."

The Brant girl was their horror—the horror of all right-thinking Wentworth; a laced, whale-boned, frizzle-headed, high-heeled daughter of iniquity, who came—from New York, of course—on long, disturbing, tumultuous visits to a Wentworth aunt, working havoc among the freshmen, and leaving, when she departed, an angry wake of criticism that ruffled the social waters for weeks. *She*, too, had tried her hand at Guy—with ludicrous unsuccess. And now, to be compared to her—to be accused of looking "New Yorky!" Ah, there are times when husbands are obtuse; and Ransom, as he stood there, thick and yet juiceless, in his dry legal middle age, with his wiry dust-coloured beard, and his perpetual *pince-nez*, seemed to his wife a sudden embodiment of this traditional attribute. Not that she had ever fancied herself, poor soul, a "*femme incomprise.*" She had, on the contrary, prided herself on being understood by her husband, almost as much as on her own complete comprehension of him. Wentworth laid a good deal of stress on "motives"; and Margaret Ransom and her husband had dwelt in a complete community of motive. It had been the proudest day of her life when, without consulting her, he had refused an offer of partnership in an eminent New York firm because he preferred the distinction of practising in Wentworth, of being known as the legal representative of the University. Wentworth, in fact, had always been the bond between the two; they were united in their veneration for that estimable seat of learning, and in their modest yet vivid consciousness of possessing its tone. The Wentworth "tone" is unmistakable: it permeates every part of the social economy, from the *coiffure* of the ladies to the preparation of the food. It has its sumptuary laws as well as its curriculum of learning. It sits in judgment not only on its own townsmen but on the rest of the world—enlightening, criticising, ostracizing a heedless universe—and nonconformity to Wentworth standards involves obliteration from Wentworth's consciousness.

In a world without traditions, without reverence, without stability, such little expiring centres of prejudice and precedent make an irresistible appeal to those instincts for which a democracy has neglected to provide. Wentworth, with its "tone," its backward references, its inflexible aversions and condemnations, its hard moral outline preserved intact against a whirling background of experiment, had been all the poetry and history of Margaret Ransom's life. Yes, what she had really

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esteemed in her husband was the fact of his being so intense an embodiment of Wentworth; so long and closely identified, for instance, with its legal affairs, that he was almost a part of its university existence, that of course, at a college banquet, he would inevitably speak for the bar!

It was wonderful of how much consequence all this had seemed till now. . . .

II

When, punctually at ten minutes to seven, her husband had emerged from the house, Margaret Ransom remained seated in her bedroom, addressing herself anew to the difficult process of self-collection. As an aid to this endeavour, she bent forward and looked out of the window, following Ransom's figure as it receded down the elm-shaded street. He moved almost alone between the prim flowerless grass-plots, the white porches, the protrusion of irrelevant shingled gables, which stamped the empty street as part of an American college town. She had always been proud of living in Hill Street, where the university people congregated, proud to associate her husband's retreating back, as he walked daily to his office, with backs literary and pedagogic, backs of which it was whispered, for the edification of duly-impressed visitors: "Wait till that old boy turns—that's so-and-so."

This had been her world, a world destitute of personal experience, but filled with a rich sense of privilege and distinction, of being not as those millions were who, denied the inestimable advantage of living at Wentworth, pursued elsewhere careers foredoomed to futility by that very fact.

And now ——!

She rose and turned to her work-table, where she had dropped, on entering, the handful of photographs that Guy Dawnish had left with her. While he sat so close, pointing out and explaining, she had hardly taken in the details; but now, on the full tones of his low young voice, they came back with redoubled distinctness. This was Guise Abbey, his uncle's place in Wiltshire, where, under his grandfather's rule, Guy's own boyhood had been spent: a long gabled Jacobean façade, many-chimneyed, ivy-draped, overhung (she felt sure) by the boughs of a venerable rookery. And in this other picture—the walled garden at Guise—that was his uncle, Lord Askern, a hale gouty-looking figure, planted robustly on the terrace, a gun on his shoulder and a couple of setters at his feet. And here was the river below the park, with Guy "punting" a girl in a flapping hat—how Margaret hated the flap that hid the girl's face! And here was the tennis-court, with Guy among a jolly cross-legged group of youths in flannels, and pretty girls about the tea-table under the big lime: in the centre the curate handing bread and butter, and in the middle distance a footman approaching with more cups.

Margaret raised this picture closer to her eyes, puzzling, in the diminished light, over the face of the girl nearest to Guy Dawnish—bent above him in profile, while he laughingly lifted his head. No hat hid this profile, which stood out clearly against the foliage behind it.

"And who is that handsome girl?" Margaret had said, detaining the photograph as he pushed it aside, and struck by the fact that, of the whole group, he had left only this member unnamed.

"Oh, only Gwendolen Matcher—I've always known her—. Look at this: the almshouses at Guise. Aren't they jolly?"

And then—without her having had the courage to ask if the girl in the punt were also Gwendolen Matcher—they passed on to photographs of his rooms at Oxford, of a cousin's studio in London—one of Lord Askern's grandsons was "artistic"—of the rose-hung cottage in Wales to which, on the old Earl's death, his daughter-in-law, Guy's mother, had retired.

Every one of the photographs opened a window on the life Margaret had been trying to picture since she had known him—a life so rich, so romantic, so packed—in the mere casual vocabulary of daily life—with historic reference and poetic allusion, that she felt almost oppressed by this distant whiff of its air. The very words he used fascinated and bewildered her. He seemed to have been born into all sorts of connections, political, historical, official, that made the Ransom situation at Wentworth as featureless as the top shelf of a dark closet. Some one in the family had "asked for the Chiltern Hundreds"—one uncle was an Elder Brother of the Trinity House—some

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one else was the Master of a College—some one was in command at Devonport—the Army, the Navy, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the most venerable seats of learning, were all woven into the dense background of this young man's light unconscious talk. For the unconsciousness was unmistakable. Margaret was not without experience of the transatlantic visitor who sounds loud names and evokes reverberating connections. The poetry of Guy Dawnish's situation lay in the fact that it was so completely a part of early associations and accepted facts. Life was like that in England—in Wentworth of course (where he had been sent, through his uncle's influence, for two years' training in the neighbouring electrical works at Smedden)—in Wentworth, though "immensely jolly," it was different. The fact that he was qualifying to be an electrical engineer—with the hope of a secretaryship at the London end of the great Smedden Company—that, at best, he was returning home to a life of industrial "grind," this fact, though avowedly a bore, did not disconnect him from that brilliant pinnacled past, that many-faceted life in which the brightest episodes of the whole body of English fiction seemed collectively reflected. Of course he would have to work—younger sons' sons almost always had to—but his uncle Askern (like Wentworth) was "immensely jolly," and Guise always open to him, and his other uncle, the Master, a capital old boy too—and in town he could always put up with his clever aunt, Lady Caroline Duckett, who had made a "beastly marriage" and was horribly poor, but who knew everybody jolly and amusing, and had always been particularly kind to him.

It was not—and Margaret had not, even in her own thoughts, to defend herself from the imputation—it was not what Wentworth would have called the "material side" of her friend's situation that captivated her. She was austerely proof against such appeals: her enthusiasms were all of the imaginative order. What subjugated her was the unexampled prodigality with which he poured for her the same draught of tradition of which Wentworth held out its little teacupful. He besieged her with a million Wentworths in one—saying, as it were: "All these are mine for the asking—and I choose you instead!"

For this, she told herself somewhat dizzily, was what it came to—the summing-up toward which her conscientious efforts at self-collection had been gradually pushing her: with all this in reach, Guy Dawnish was leaving Wentworth reluctantly.

"I *was* a bit lonely here at first—but *now!*" And again: "It will be jolly, of course, to see them all again—but there are some things one doesn't easily give up. . . ."

If he had known only Wentworth, it would have been wonderful enough that he should have chosen her out of all Wentworth—but to have known that other life, and to set her in the balance against it—poor Margaret Ransom, in whom, at the moment, nothing seemed of weight but her years! Ah, it might well produce, in nerves and brain, and poor unpractised pulses, a flushed tumult of sensation, the rush of a great wave of life, under which memory struggled in vain to reassert itself, to particularize again just what his last words—the very last—had been. . . .

When consciousness emerged, quivering, from this retrospective assault, it pushed Margaret Ransom—feeling herself a mere leaf in the blast—toward the writing-table from which her innocent and voluminous correspondence habitually flowed. She had a letter to write now—much shorter but more difficult than any she had ever been called on to indite.

"Dear Mr. Dawnish," she began, "since telephoning you just now I have decided not——"

Maria's voice, at the door, announced that tea was in the library: "And I s'pose it's the brown silk you'll wear to the speaking?"

In the usual order of the Ransom existence, its mistress's toilet was performed unassisted; and the mere enquiry—at once friendly and deferential—projected, for Margaret, a strong light on the importance of the occasion. That she should answer: "But I am not going," when the going was so manifestly part of a household solemnity about which the thoughts below stairs fluttered in proud participation; that in face of such participation she should utter a word implying indifference or hesitation—nay, revealing herself the transposed, uprooted thing she had been on the verge of becoming; to do this was—well! infinitely harder

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than to perform the alternative act of tearing up the sheet of note-paper under her reluctant pen.

Yes, she said, she would wear the brown silk. . . .

III

All the heat and glare from the long illuminated table, about which the fumes of many courses still hung in a savoury fog, seemed to surge up to the ladies' gallery, and concentrate themselves in the burning cheeks of a slender figure withdrawn behind the projection of a pillar.

It never occurred to Margaret Ransom that she was sitting in the shade. She supposed that the full light of the chandeliers was beating on her face—and there were moments when it seemed as though all the heads about the great horse-shoe below, bald, shaggy, sleek, close-thatched, or thinly latticed, were equipped with an additional pair of eyes, set at an angle which enabled them to rake her face as relentlessly as the electric burners.

In the lull after a speech, the gallery was fluttering with the rustle of programmes consulted, and Mrs. Sheff (the Brant girl's aunt) leaned forward to say enthusiastically: "And now we're to hear Mr. Ransom!"

A louder buzz rose from the table, and the heads (without relaxing their upward vigilance) seemed to merge, and flow together, like an attentive flood, toward the upper end of the horse-shoe, where all the threads of Margaret Ransom's consciousness were suddenly drawn into what seemed a small speck, no more—a black speck that rose, hung in air, dissolved into gyrating gestures, became distended, enormous, preponderant—became her husband "speaking."

"It's the heat—" Margaret gasped, pressing her handkerchief to her whitening lips, and finding just strength enough left to push back farther into the shadow.

She felt a touch on her arm. "It *is* horrible—shall we go?" a voice suggested; and, "Yes, yes, let us go," she whispered, feeling, with a great throb of relief, *that* to be the only possible, the only conceivable, solution. To sit and listen to her husband *now*—how could she ever have thought she could survive it? Luckily, under the lingering hubbub from below, his opening words were inaudible, and she had only to run the gauntlet of sympathetic feminine glances, shot after her between waving fans and programmes, as, guided by Guy Dawnish, she managed to reach the door. It was really so hot that even Mrs. Sheff was not much surprised—till long afterward. . . .

The winding staircase was empty, half dark and blessedly silent. In a committee room below Dawnish found the inevitable water jug, and filled a glass for her, while she leaned back, confronted only by a frowning college President in an emblazoned frame. The academic frown descended on her like an anathema when she rose and followed her companion out of the building.

Hamblin Hall stands at the end of the long green "Campus" with its sextuple line of elms—the boast and singularity of Wentworth. A pale spring moon, rising above the dome of the University library at the opposite end of the elm-walk, diffused a pearly mildness in the sky, melted to thin haze the shadows of the trees, and turned to golden yellow the lights of the college windows. Against this soft suffusion of light the Library cupola assumed a Bramantesque grace, the white steeple of the congregational church became a campanile topped by a winged spirit, and the scant porticoes of the older halls the colonnades of classic temples.

"This is better—" Dawnish said, as they passed down the steps and under the shadow of the elms.

They moved on a little way in silence before he began again: "You're too tired to walk. Let us sit down a few minutes."

Her feet, in truth, were leaden, and not far off a group of park benches, encircling the pedestal of a patriot in bronze, invited them to rest. But Dawnish was guiding her toward a lateral path which bent, through shrubberies, toward a strip of turf between two of the buildings.

"It will be cooler by the river," he said, moving on without waiting for a possible protest. None came: it seemed easier, for the moment, to let herself be led without any conventional feint of resistance. And besides, there was nothing wrong about *this*—the wrong would have been in sitting up there in the glare, pretending to listen to her husband, a dutiful wife among her kind. . . .

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The path descended, as both knew, to the chosen, the inimitable spot of Wentworth: that fugitive curve of the river, where, before hurrying on to glut the brutal industries of South Wentworth and Smedden, it simulated for a few hundred yards the leisurely pace of an ancient university stream, with willows on its banks and a stretch of turf extending from the grounds of Hamblin Hall to the boat houses at the farther bend. Here too were benches, beneath the willows, and so close to the river that the voice of its gliding softened and filled out the reverberating silence between Margaret and her companion, and made her feel that she knew why he had brought her there.

"Do you feel better?" he asked gently as he sat down beside her.

"Oh, yes. I only needed a little air."

"I'm so glad you did. Of course the speeches were tremendously interesting—but I prefer this. What a good night!"

"Yes."

There was a pause, which now, after all, the soothing accompaniment of the river seemed hardly sufficient to fill.

"I wonder what time it is. I ought to be going home," Margaret began at length.

"Oh, it's not late. They'll be at it for hours in there—yet."

She made a faint inarticulate sound. She wanted to say: "No—Robert's speech was to be the last—" but she could not bring herself to pronounce Ransom's name, and at the moment no other way of refuting her companion's statement occurred to her.

The young man leaned back luxuriously, reassured by her silence.

"You see it's my last chance—and I want to make the most of it."

"Your last chance?" How stupid of her to repeat his words on that cooing note of interrogation! It was just such a lead as the Brant girl might have given him.

"To be with you—like this. I haven't had so many. And there's less than a week left."

She attempted to laugh. "Perhaps it will sound longer if you call it five days."

The flatness of that, again! And she knew there were people who called her intelligent. Fortunately he did not seem to notice it; but her laugh continued to sound in her own ears—the coquettish chirp of middle age! She decided that if he spoke again—if he *said anything*—she would make no farther effort at evasion: she would take it directly, seriously, frankly—she would not be doubly disloyal.

"Besides," he continued, throwing his arm along the back of the bench, and turning toward her so that his face was like a dusky bas-relief with a silver rim—"besides, there's something I've been wanting to tell you."

The sound of the river seemed to cease altogether: the whole world became silent.

Margaret had trusted her inspiration farther than it appeared likely to carry her. Again she could think of nothing happier than to repeat, on the same witless note of interrogation: "To tell me?"

"You only."

The constraint, the difficulty, seemed to be on his side now: she divined it by the renewed shifting of his attitude—he was capable, usually, of such fine intervals of immobility—and by a confusion in his utterance that set her own voice throbbing in her throat.

"You've been so perfect to me," he began again. "It's not my fault if you've made me feel that you would understand everything—make allowances for everything—see just how a man may have held out, and fought against a thing—as long as he had the strength. . . . This may be my only chance; and I can't go away without telling you."

He had turned from her now, and was staring at the river, so that his profile was projected against the moonlight in all its beautiful young dejection.

There was a slight pause, as though he waited for her to speak; then she leaned forward and laid her hand on his.

"If I have really been—if I have done for you even the least part of what you say . . . what you imagine . . . will you do for me, now, just one thing in return?"

He sat motionless, as if fearing to frighten away the shy touch on his hand, and she left it there, conscious of her gesture only as part of the high ritual of their farewell.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked in a low tone.

"*Not* to tell me!" she breathed on a deep note of entreaty.

"*Not* to tell you——?"

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"Anything—*anything*—just to leave our . . . our friendship . . . as it has been—as —as a painter, if a friend asked him, might leave a picture—not quite finished, perhaps . . . but all the more exquisite. . . ."

She felt the hand under hers slip away, recover itself, and seek her own, which had flashed out of reach in the same instant—felt the start that swept him round on her as if he had been caught and turned about by the shoulders.

"You—*you*—?" he stammered, in a strange voice full of fear and tenderness; but she held fast, so centred in her inexorable resolve that she was hardly conscious of the effect her words might be producing.

"Don't you see," she hurried on, "don't you *feel* how much safer it is—yes, I'm willing to put it so!—how much safer to leave everything undisturbed . . . just as . . . as it has grown of itself . . . without trying to say: 'It's this or that' . . .? It's what we each choose to call it to ourselves, after all, isn't it? Don't let us try to find a name that . . . that we should both agree upon . . . we probably shouldn't succeed." She laughed abruptly. "And ghosts vanish when one names them!" she ended with a break in her voice.

When she ceased her heart was beating so violently that there was a rush in her ears like the noise of the river after rain, and she did not immediately make out what he was answering. But as she recovered her lucidity she said to herself that, whatever he was saying, she must not hear it; and she began to speak again, half playfully, half appealingly, with an eloquence of entreaty, an ingenuity in argument, of which she had never dreamed herself capable. And then, suddenly, strangling hands seemed to reach up from her heart to her throat, and she had to stop.

Her companion remained motionless. He had not tried to regain her hand, and his eyes were away from her, on the river. But his nearness had become something formidable and exquisite—something she had never before imagined. A flush of guilt swept over her—vague reminiscences of French novels and of opera plots. This was what such women felt, then . . . this was "shame." . . . Phrases of the newspaper and the pulpit danced before her. . . . She dared not speak, and his silence began to frighten her. Had ever a heart beat so wildly before in Wentworth?

He turned at last, and taking her two hands, quite simply, kissed them one after the other.

"I shall never forget—" he said in a confused voice, unlike his own.

A return of strength enabled her to rise, and even to let her eyes meet his for a moment.

"Thank you," she said, simply also.

She turned away from the bench, regaining the path that led back to the college buildings, and he walked beside her in silence. When they reached the elm walk it was dotted with dispersing groups. The "speaking" was over, and Hamblin Hall had poured its audience out into the moonlight. Margaret felt a rush of relief, followed by a receding wave of regret. She had the distinct sensation that her hour—her one hour—was over.

One of the groups just ahead broke up as they approached, and projected Ransom's solid bulk against the moonlight.

"My husband," she said, hastening forward; and she never afterward forgot the look of his back—heavy, round-shouldered, yet a little pompous—in a badly fitting overcoat that stood out at the neck and hid his collar. She had never before noticed how he dressed.

IV

THEY met again, inevitably, before Dawnish left; but the thing she feared did not happen—he did not try to see her alone.

It even became clear to her, in looking back, that he had deliberately avoided doing so: and this seemed merely an added proof of his "understanding," of that deep undefinable communion that set them alone in an empty world, as if on a peak above the clouds.

The five days passed in a flash; and when the last one came, it brought to Margaret Ransom an hour of weakness, of profound disorganization, when old barriers fell, old convictions faded—when to be alone with him for a moment became, after all, the one craving of her heart. She knew he was coming that afternoon to say "good-by"—and she knew also that Ransom was to be away at South Wentworth. She waited alone in her pale little drawing-

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room, with its scant kakemonos, its one or two chilly reproductions from the antique, its slippery Chippendale chairs. At length the bell rang, and her world became a rosy blur—through which she presently discerned the austere form of Mrs. Sperry, wife of the Professor of palæontology, who had come to talk over with her the next winter's programme for the Higher Thought Club. They debated the question for an hour, and when Mrs. Sperry departed Margaret had a confused impression that the course was to deal with the influence of the First Crusade on the development of European architecture—but the sentient part of her knew only that Dawnish had not come.

He "bobbed in," as he would have put it, after dinner—having, it appeared, run across Ransom early in the day, and learned that the latter would be absent till evening. Margaret was in the study with her husband when the door opened and Dawnish stood there. Ransom—who had not had time to dress—was seated at his desk, a pile of shabby law books at his elbow, the light from a hanging lamp falling on his grayish stubble of hair, his sallow forehead and spectacled eyes. Dawnish, towering higher than usual against the shadows of the room, and refined by his unusual pallor, hung a moment on the threshold, then came in, explaining himself profusely—laughing, accepting a cigar, letting Ransom push an arm-chair forward—a Dawnish she had never seen, ill at ease, ejaculatory, yet somehow more mature, more obscurely in command of himself.

Margaret drew back, seating herself in the shade, in such a way that she saw her husband's head first, and beyond it their visitor's, relieved against the dusk of the book shelves. Her heart was still—she felt no throbbing in her throat or temples: all her life seemed concentrated in the hand that lay on her knee, the hand he would touch when they said good-by.

Afterward her heart rang all the changes, and there was a mood in which she reproached herself for cowardice—for having deliberately missed her one moment with him, the moment in which she might have sounded the depths of life, for joy or anguish. But that mood was fleeting and infrequent. In quieter hours she blushed for it—she even trembled to think that he might have guessed such a regret in her. It seemed to convict her of a lack of fineness that he should have had, in his youth and his power, a tenderer, surer sense of the peril of a rash touch—should have handled the case so much more delicately.

At first her days were fire and the nights long solemn vigils. Her thoughts were no longer vulgarized and defaced by any notion of "guilt," of mental disloyalty. She was ashamed now of her shame. What had happened was as much outside the sphere of her marriage as some transaction in a star. It had simply given her a secret life of incommunicable joys, as if all the wasted springs of her youth had been stored in some hidden pool, and she could return there now to bathe in them.

After that there came a phase of loneliness, through which the life about her loomed phantasmal and remote. She thought the dead must feel thus, repeating the vain gestures of the living beside some Stygian shore. She wondered if any other woman had lived to whom *nothing had ever happened*? And then his first letter came. . . .

It was a charming letter—a perfect letter. The little touch of awkwardness and constraint under its boyish spontaneity told her more than whole pages of eloquence. He spoke of their friendship—of their good days together. . . . Ransom, chancing to come in while she read, noticed the foreign stamps; and she was able to hand him the letter, saying gaily: "There's a message for you," and knowing all the while that *her* message was safe in her heart.

On the days when the letters came the outlines of things grew indistinct, and she could never afterward remember what she had done or how the business of life had been carried on. It was always a surprise when she found dinner on the table as usual, and Ransom seated opposite to her, running over the evening paper.

But though Dawnish continued to write, with all the English loyalty to the outward observances of friendship, his communications came only at intervals of several weeks, and between them she had time to repossess herself, to regain some sort of normal contact with life. And the customary, the recurring, gradually reclaimed her, the net of habit tightened again—her

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daily life became real, and her one momentary escape from it an exquisite illusion. Not that she ceased to believe in the miracle that had befallen her: she still treasured the reality of her one moment beside the river. What reason was there for doubting it? She could hear the ring of truth in young Dawnish's voice: "It's not my fault if you've made me feel that you would understand everything. . . ." No! she believed in her miracle, and the belief sweetened and illumined her life; but she came to see that what was for her the transformation of her whole being might well have been, for her companion, a mere passing explosion of gratitude, of boyish good-fellowship touched with the pang of leave-taking. She even reached the point of telling herself that it was "better so": this view of the episode so defended it from the alternating extremes of self-reproach and derision, so enshrined it in a pale immortality to which she could make her secret pilgrimages without reproach.

For a long time she had not been able to pass by the bench under the willows—she even avoided the elm walk till autumn had stripped its branches. But every day, now, she noted a step toward recovery; and at last a day came when, walking along the river, she said to herself, as she approached the bench: "I used not to be able to pass here without thinking of him; *and now I am not thinking of him at all!*"

This seemed such convincing proof of her recovery that she began, as spring returned, to permit herself, now and then, a quiet session on the bench—a dedicated hour from which she went back fortified to her task.

She had not heard from her friend for six weeks or more—the intervals between his letters were growing longer. But that was "best" too, and she was not anxious, for she knew he had obtained the post he had been preparing for, and that his active life in London had begun. The thought reminded her, one mild March day, that in leaving the house she had thrust in her reticule a letter from a Wentworth friend who was abroad on a holiday. The envelope bore the London post mark, a fact showing that the lady's face was turned toward home. Margaret seated herself on her bench, and drawing out the letter began to read it.

The London described was that of shops and museums—as remote as possible from the setting of Guy Dawnish's existence. But suddenly Margaret's eye fell on his name, and the page began to tremble in her hands.

"I heard such a funny thing yesterday about your friend Mr. Dawnish. We went to a tea at Professor Bunce's (I do wish you knew the Bunces—their atmosphere is so *uplifting*), and there I met that Miss Bruce-Pringle who came out last year to take a course in histology at the Annex. Of course she asked about you and Mr. Ransom, and then she told me she had just seen Mr. Dawnish's aunt—the clever one he was always talking about, Lady Caroline something—and that they were all in a dreadful state about him. I wonder if you knew he was engaged when he went to America? He never mentioned it to *us*. She said it was not a positive engagement, but an understanding with a girl he has always been devoted to, who lives near their place in Wiltshire; and both families expected the marriage to take place as soon as he got back. It seems the girl is an heiress (you know *how low* the English ideals are compared with ours), and Miss Bruce-Pringle said his relations were perfectly delighted at his 'being provided for,' as she called it. Well, when he got back he asked the girl to release him; and she and her family were furious, and so were his people; but he holds out, and won't marry her, and won't give a reason, except that he has 'formed an unfortunate attachment.' Did you ever hear anything so peculiar? His aunt, who is quite wild about it, says it must have happened at Wentworth, because he didn't go anywhere else in America. Do you suppose it *could* have been the Brant girl? But why 'unfortunate' when everybody knows she would have jumped at him?"

Margaret folded the letter and looked out across the river. It was not the same river, but a mystic current shot with moonlight. The bare willows wove a leafy veil above her head, and beside her she felt the nearness of youth and tempestuous tenderness. It had all happened just here, on this very seat by the river—it had come to her, and passed her by, and she had not held out a hand to detain it. . . .

Well! Was it not, by that very abstention, made more deeply and ineffaceably hers? She could argue thus while she had

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thought the episode, on his side, a mere transient effect of propinquity; but now that she knew it had altered the whole course of his life, now that it took on substance and reality, asserted a separate existence outside of her own troubled consciousness—now it seemed almost cowardly to have missed her share in it.

She walked home in a dream. Now and then, when she passed an acquaintance, she wondered if the pain and glory were written on her face. But Mrs. Sperry, who stopped her at the corner of Maverick Street to say a word about the next meeting of the Higher Thought Club, seemed to remark no change in her.

When she reached home Ransom had not yet returned from the office, and she went straight to the library to tidy his writing-table. It was part of her daily duty to bring order out of the chaos of his papers, and of late she had fastened on such small recurring tasks as some one falling over a precipice might snatch at the weak bushes in its clefts.

When she had sorted the letters she took up some pamphlets and newspapers, glancing over them to see if they were to be kept. Among the papers was a page torn from a London *Times* of the previous month. Her eye ran down its columns and suddenly a paragraph flamed out.

"We are requested to state that the marriage arranged between Mr. Guy Dawnish, son of the late Colonel the Hon. Roderick Dawnish, of Malby, Wilts, and Gwendolen, daughter of Samuel Matcher, Esq. of Armingham Towers, Wilts, will not take place."

Margaret dropped the paper and sat down, hiding her face against the stained baize of the desk. She remembered the photograph of the tennis-court at Guise—she remembered the handsome girl at whom Guy Dawnish looked up, laughing. A gust of tears shook her, loosening the dry surface of conventional feeling, welling up from unsuspected depths. She was sorry—very sorry, yet so glad—so ineffably, impenitently glad.

V

THERE came a reaction in which she decided to write to him. She even sketched out a letter of sisterly, almost motherly, remonstrance, in which she reminded him that he "still had all his life before him." But she reflected that so, after all, had she; and that seemed to weaken the argument.

In the end she decided not to send the letter. He had never spoken to her of his engagement to Gwendolen Matcher, and his letters had contained no allusion to any sentimental disturbance in his life. She had only his few broken words, that night by the river, on which to build her theory of the case. But illuminated by the phrase "an unfortunate attachment" the theory towered up, distinct and immovable, like some high landmark by which travellers shape their course. She had been loved—extraordinarily loved. But he had chosen that she should know of it by his silence rather than by his speech. He had understood that only on those terms could their transcendant communion continue—that he must lose her to keep her. To break that silence would be like spilling a cup of water in a waste of sand. There would be nothing left for her thirst.

Her life, thenceforward, was bathed in a tranquil beauty. The days flowed by like a river beneath the moon—each ripple caught the brightness and passed it on. She began to take a renewed interest in her familiar round of duties. The tasks which had once seemed colourless and irksome had now a kind of sacrificial sweetness, a symbolic meaning into which she alone was initiated. She had been restless—had longed to travel; now she felt that she should never again care to leave Wentworth. But if her desire to wander had ceased, she travelled in spirit, performing invisible pilgrimages in the footsteps of her friend. She regretted that her one short visit to England had taken her so little out of London—that her acquaintance with the landscape had been formed chiefly through the windows of a railway carriage. She threw herself into the architectural studies of the Higher Thought Club, and distinguished herself, at the spring meetings, by her fluency, her competence, her inexhaustible curiosity on the subject of the growth of English Gothic. She ransacked the shelves of the college library, she borrowed photographs of the cathedrals, she pored over the folio pages of "The Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen." She was like some banished princess who learns that she

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has inherited a domain in her own country, who knows that she will never see it, yet feels, wherever she walks, its soil beneath her feet.

May was half over, and the Higher Thought Club was to hold its last meeting, previous to the college festivities which, in early June, agreeably disorganized the social routine of Wentworth. The meeting was to take place in Margaret Ransom's drawing-room, and on the day before she sat upstairs preparing for her dual duties as hostess and orator—for she had been invited to read the final paper of the course. In order to sum up with precision her conclusions on the subject of English Gothic she had been rereading an analysis of the structural features of the principal English cathedrals; and she was murmuring over to herself the phrase: "The longitudinal arches of Lincoln have an approximately elliptical form," when there came a knock on the door, and Maria's voice announced: "There's a lady down in the parlour."

Margaret's soul dropped from the heights of the shadowy vaulting to the dead level of an afternoon call at Wentworth.

"A lady? Did she give no name?"

Maria became confused. "She only said she was a lady—" and in reply to her mistress's look of mild surprise: "Well, ma'am, she told me so three or four times over."

Margaret laid her book down, leaving it open at the description of Lincoln, and slowly descended the stairs. As she did so, she repeated to herself: "The longitudinal arches are elliptical."

On the threshold below, she had the odd impression that her bare inanimate drawing-room was brimming with life and noise—an impression produced, as she presently perceived, by the resolute forward dash—it was almost a pounce—of the one small figure restlessly measuring its length.

The dash checked itself within a yard of Margaret, and the lady—a stranger—held back long enough to stamp on her hostess a sharp impression of sallowness, leanness, keenness, before she said, in a voice that might have been addressing an unruly committee meeting: "I am Lady Caroline Duckett—a fact I found it impossible to make clear to the young woman who let me in."

A warm wave rushed up from Margaret's heart to her throat and forehead. She held out both hands impulsively. "Oh, I'm so glad—I'd no idea——"

Her voice sank under her visitor's impartial scrutiny.

"I don't wonder," said the latter drily. "I suppose she didn't mention, either, that my object in calling here was to see Mrs. Ransom?"

"Oh, yes—won't you sit down?" Margaret pushed a chair forward. She seated herself at a little distance, brain and heart humming with a confused interchange of signals. This dark sharp woman was his aunt—the "clever aunt" who had had such a hard life, but had always managed to keep her head above water. Margaret remembered that Guy had spoken of her kindness—perhaps she would seem kinder when they had talked together a little. Meanwhile the first impression she produced was of an amplitude out of all proportion to her somewhat scant exterior. With her small flat figure, her shabby heterogeneous dress, she was as dowdy as any Professor's wife at Wentworth; but her dowdiness (Margaret borrowed a literary analogy to define it), her dowdiness was somehow "of the centre." Like the insignificant emissary of a great power, she was to be judged rather by her passports than her person.

While Margaret was receiving these impressions, Lady Caroline, with quick bird-like twists of her head, was gathering others from the pale void spaces of the drawing-room. Her eyes, divided by a sharp nose like a bill, seemed to be set far enough apart to see at separate angles; but suddenly she bent both of them on Margaret.

"This *is* Mrs. Ransom's house?" she asked, with an emphasis on the verb that gave a distinct hint of unfulfilled expectations.

Margaret assented.

"Because your American houses, especially in the provincial towns, all look so remarkably alike, that I thought I might have been mistaken; and as my time is extremely limited—in fact I'm sailing on Wednesday——"

She paused long enough to let Margaret say: "I had no idea you were in this country."

Lady Caroline made no attempt to take this up. "And so much of it," she carried

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on her sentence, "has been wasted in talking to people I really hadn't the slightest desire to see, that you must excuse me if I go straight to the point."

Margaret felt a sudden tension of the heart. "Of course," she said while a voice within her cried: "He is dead—he has left me a message."

There was another pause; then Lady Caroline went on, with increasing asperity: "So that—in short—if I *could* see Mrs. Ransom at once——"

Margaret looked up in surprise. "I am Mrs. Ransom," she said.

The other stared a moment, with much the same look of cautious incredulity that had marked her inspection of the drawing-room. Then light came to her.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I should have said that I wished to see Mrs. *Robert* Ransom, not Mrs. Ransom. But I understood that in the States you don't make those distinctions." She paused a moment, and then went on, before Margaret could answer: "Perhaps, after all, it's as well that I should see you instead, since you're evidently one of the household—your son and his wife live with you, I suppose? Yes, on the whole, then, it's better—I shall be able to talk so much more frankly." She spoke as if, as a rule, circumstances prevented her giving rein to this propensity. "And frankness, of course, is the only way out of this—this extremely tiresome complication. You know, I suppose, that my nephew thinks he's in love with your daughter-in-law?"

Margaret made a slight movement, but her visitor pressed on without heeding it. "Oh, don't fancy, please, that I'm pretending to take a high moral ground—though his mother does, poor dear! I can perfectly imagine that in a place like this—I've just been driving about it for two hours—a young man of Guy's age would *have* to provide himself with some sort of distraction, and he's not the kind to go in for anything objectionable. Oh, we quite allow for that—we should allow for the whole affair, if it hadn't so preposterously ended in his throwing over the girl he was engaged to, and upsetting an arrangement that affected a number of people besides himself. I understand that in the States it's different—the young people have only themselves to consider. In England—in our class, I mean—a great deal may depend on a young man's making a good match; and in Guy's case I may say that his mother and sisters (I won't include myself, though I might) have been simply stranded—thrown overboard—by his freak. You can understand how serious it is when I tell you that it's that and nothing else that has brought me all the way to America. And my first idea was to go straight to your daughter-in-law, since her influence is the only thing we can count on now, and put it to her fairly, as I'm putting it to you. But, on the whole, I dare say it's better to see you first—you might give me an idea of the line to take with her. I'm prepared to throw myself on her mercy!"

Margaret rose from her chair, outwardly rigid in proportion to her inward tremor.

"You don't understand—" she began.

Lady Caroline brushed the interruption aside. "Oh, but I do—completely! I cast no reflection on your daughter-in-law. Guy has made it quite clear to us that his attachment is—has, in short, not been rewarded. But don't you see that that's the worst part of it? There'd be much more hope of his recovering if Mrs. Robert Ransom had—had——"

Margaret's voice broke from her in a cry. "I am Mrs. Robert Ransom," she said.

If Lady Caroline Duckett had hitherto given her hostess the impression of a person not easily silenced, this fact added sensibly to the effect produced by the intense stillness which now fell on her.

She sat quite motionless, her large bangled hands clasped about the meagre fur boa she had unwound from her neck on entering, her rusty black veil pushed up to the edge of a "fringe" of doubtful authenticity, her thin lips parted on a gasp that seemed to sharpen itself on the edges of her teeth. So overwhelming and helpless was her silence that Margaret began to feel a motion of pity beneath her indignation—a desire at least to facilitate the excuses which must terminate their disastrous colloquy. But when Lady Caroline found voice she did not use it to excuse herself.

"You *can't* be," she said, quite simply.

"Can't be?" Margaret stammered, with a flushing cheek.

"I mean, it's some mistake. Are there *two* Mrs. Robert Ransoms in the same town? Your family arrangements are so extremely puzzling." She had a farther

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rush of enlightenment. "Oh, I *see!* I ought of course to have asked for Mrs. Robert Ransom 'Junior'!"

The idea sent her to her feet with a haste which showed her impatience to make up for lost time.

"There is no other Mrs. Robert Ransom at Wentworth," said Margaret.

"No other—no 'Junior'? Are you *sure?*" Lady Caroline fell back into her seat again. "Then I simply don't see," she murmured helplessly.

Margaret's blush had fixed itself on her throbbing forehead. She remained standing, while her strange visitor continued to gaze at her with a perturbation in which the consciousness of indiscretion had evidently as yet no part.

"I simply don't see," she repeated.

Suddenly she sprang up, and advancing to Margaret laid an inspired hand on her arm. "But, my dear woman, you can help us out all the same; you can help us to find out *who it is*—and you will, won't you? Because, as it's not you, you can't in the least mind what I've been saying——"

Margaret, freeing her arm from her visitor's hold, drew back a step; but Lady Caroline instantly rejoined her.

"Of course, I can see that if it *had* been, you might have been annoyed: I dare say I put the case stupidly—but I'm so bewildered by this new development—by his using you all this time as a pretext—that I really don't know where to turn for light on the mystery——"

She had Margaret in her imperious grasp again, but the latter broke from her with a more resolute gesture.

"I'm afraid I have no light to give you," she began; but once more Lady Caroline caught her up.

"Oh, but do please understand me! I condemn Guy most strongly for using your name—when we all know you'd been so amazingly kind to him! I haven't a word to say in his defence—but of course the important thing now is: *who is the woman, since you're not?*"

The question rang out loudly, as if all the pale puritan corners of the room flung it back with a shudder at the speaker. In the silence that ensued Margaret felt the blood ebbing back to her heart; then she said, in a distinct and level voice: "I know nothing of the history of Mr. Dawnish."

Lady Caroline gave a stare and a gasp. Her distracted hand groped for her boa and she began to wind it mechanically about her long neck.

"It would really be an enormous help to us—and to poor Gwendolen Matcher," she persisted pleadingly. "And you'd be doing Guy himself a good turn."

Margaret remained silent and motionless while her visitor drew on one of the worn gloves she had pulled off to adjust her veil. Lady Caroline gave the veil a final twitch.

"I've come a tremendously long way," she said, "and, since it isn't you, I can't think why you won't help me. . . ."

When the door had closed on her visitor Margaret Ransom went slowly up the stairs to her room. As she dragged her feet from one step to another, she remembered how she had sprung up the same steep flight after that visit of Guy Dawnish's when she had looked in the glass and seen on her face the blush of youth.

When she reached her room she bolted the door as she had done that day, and again looked at herself in the narrow mirror above her dressing-table. It was just a year since then—the elms were budding again, the willows hanging their green veil above the bench by the river. But there was no trace of youth left in her face—she saw it now as others had doubtless always seen it. If it seemed as it did to Lady Caroline Duckett, what look must it have worn to the fresh gaze of young Guy Dawnish?

A pretext—she had been a pretext. He had used her name to screen some one else—or perhaps merely to escape from a situation of which he was weary. She did not care to conjecture what his motive had been—everything connected with him had grown so remote and alien. She felt no anger—only an unspeakable sadness, a sadness which she knew would never be appeased.

She looked at herself long and steadily: she wished to clear her eyes of all illusions. Then she turned away and took her usual seat beside her work-table. From where she sat she could look down the empty elm-shaded street, up which, at this hour every day, she was sure to see her husband's figure advancing. She would see it presently—she would see it for many years to come. She had a sudden aching sense of the length

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of the years that stretched before her. Strange that one who was not young should still, in all likelihood, have so long to live!

Nothing was changed in the setting of her life, perhaps nothing would ever change in it. She would certainly live and die in Wentworth. And meanwhile the days would go on as usual, bringing the usual obligations. As the word flitted through her brain she remembered that she had still to put the finishing touches to the paper she was to read the next afternoon at the meeting of the Higher Thought Club. The book she had been reading lay face downward beside her, where she had left it an hour ago. She took it up, and slowly and painfully, like a child laboriously spelling out the syllables, she went on with the rest of the sentence:

—"and they spring from a level not much above that of the springing of the transverse and diagonal ribs, which are so arranged as to give a convex curve to the surface of the vaulting conoid."

A SON OF DREAMS

By Caspar Day

ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. J. AYLWARD

PENAGEN was a one-mine town, back in the hills from anywhere. The Ripple-with Company drew good dividends from Penagen coal under the management of Martin Hooley; six Welsh bosses earned their pay and took their graft in directing seventeen hundred men and boys. Two hundred double houses and thirty-nine single dwellings gave roof-room to the dusty host. They sheltered also nine languages, and cripples all too many. There were crosses on some graves in the hill cemetery, but none the less Penagen stands among the little cities God forgot.

Adam Suwaloff sat in the kitchen of his house, looking down the hill on Penagen. He shivered and drew the blanket close about him even while he cowered against the stove. Rheumatism tore at his joints. He wrung his powder-marked hands nervously above the heat as he returned to an old grief.

"He is not my son, Stasia. I have always feared you picked up the wrong child, there in the shop at Minsk. He does not look like us, either of us."

"The mixed breed," spoke the woman, who was patching shoes on her bench by the window. "The half-Jew is never Jew. The half-noble never looks like anybody. You have seen enough of the world to know that."

The sick man glowered at her. Stasia's strong profile against the window-pane was dim to his near-sighted eyes.

"But he cares nothing for learning, see: I cannot do more than teach him bare reading and writing. I cannot get him to listen to the deeds of his great-grandfather——"

"I told you he was only a half-noble," spoke the Jewish woman. "Can my blood make him a Polish patriot? A leader of men's hearts? You saw them whip me at the mines that day when you were newly come from Russia; and I had been there two years before you came. You knew. You were warned in time."

"But he cares nothing for the Cause!"

"He is a good boy to work for us."

"The vice of private property has bitten into his very bones, Stasia. No, no, he must be some mouzik's son! Not ours. For you—you have made sacrifices, even as I: your son should have freedom in his blood."

"This year past we have lived mostly on his wages. You have been sick so often."

"Gods! For six months I have not sent a kopeck back to Russia!" He buried his face in his palms and groaned. "To dedicate one's life—to waste one's youth in prisons—in my old age to eat gruel and give nothing to the Revolution!"

"You will be better when the winter dies. Then you can send."

"He is all for money, money!"

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Stasia finished a shoe and laid it by before she answered. "Isn't that Jew as much as mouzik, comrade?"

"To save money, buy houses, keep a saloon, go into politics—! That is his dream. Politics! Holy Christ, he wants to become a Mayor! Politics—in this country! —A pig's dream, not a man's. And my house were leaders, princes, men of high thoughts!"

"But America changes people, comrade. He was a baby in arms when we escaped, and it is not his fault that he grew up an American. He breathed it while he grew, this strange air, and it had no dreams in it."

Suwaloff was silent; he relapsed into his brooding. Stasia worked fast at her strange trade, hurrying to use the light of the January afternoon. Once she rose to stir the fire and to fill the kettles anew in preparation for the boarders' baths. Dusk settled grayly. Then Martin came home from the shaft.

"It's goin' to snow to-night," the boy proclaimed in the rusty basso of sixteen. His dinner-can banged down upon the bench, his coat dropped in a corner, his heavy boots sprawled on the floor. Martin was a big, noisy, disorderly creature, healthy, vital, never tired. "No, I do' want no bath only this. It's me busy day. I'm goin' in again at six, drivin' on Jim Eroh's road."

"Polish!" commanded Suwaloff in fury. It was a daily pang that Martin lapsed so readily into English in that house. "A noble's son, you white-head, and you speak like any Irishman! Silence!"

The Jewish woman poured steaming water into the hand basin. Her son scrubbed the day's soot and oil-black from his face with a plentiful spattering of suds.

"Is supper cooked?" he demanded in the midst of his ablutions. "Ah, I smell the meat. I'm glad we're no Catholics, on Fridays! I'll eat a pound to-night.—Where's the towel?—Yes, and if I am spry with a good team to-night, and Jim sees it and speaks to his old man for me, perhaps old Eroh will promote me to a runner's job. That is fine, fat pay."

"Eroh is a thief, a scoundrel!"

"Truly, truly; though he understands mining. But if I can buy a better job of him, I will. It is business. It is like rent and meat-bills and taxes: you pay because it costs more not to."

"Taxes!" The father's voice rose to a shriek. "Marcin, Marcin, you have the soul of a serf in those bones of yours! Oh, shame, shame! Taxes—How often have I explained to you that it is a crime for the state to tax at all?"

"I remember you said so," the boy admitted, scouring vigorously at his neck with a wet end of the towel. Stasia filled a deep plate with hot meat and broth and placed it beside her son on the table. He ate standing, blowing noisily upon the iron spoon to cool each mouthful. "But if—my wages are high enough—and work so plenty—I do not worry at taxes. Why should I?"

A gleam that was like frenzy blazed in the ex-noble's eyes. Privation and martyred years had left him with a zeal that bordered close to mania.

"Go out!" he ordered. "Go out! Out of my sight!"

The lean-to shed outside gave shelter from the wind, and in it young Martin waited for a moment. His mother was not long in coming; she had refilled the steaming bowl and now brought it to him. She stood and watched him eat. The age-old patience of a subject race was in her look.

"It's cold here, an' me shoes is inside," spoke the lusty youngster. "I'll just slip over to Bill's till six. I'd hate to be cold when I start for work, for it's bitter bad down inside, this weather. I'm sorry I made the ol' man mad. I wasn't meanin' to. Now I s'pose you'll catch it for me. He's full o' them *i*-deas."

The Jewish woman answered as always in Polish. "In Russia you might have grown a great patriot yourself. But not here: you are too busy and too contented. No, not here."

"Only for his notions, we'd start in runnin' a speak-easy, you an' me. But we'd never make a go of it, this way; he can't stand to see a person in the house that ain't dumb-foolish over Russia."

"You do not know," spoke the mother. Her smile was clouded with the shadow of her prison years. "I bless the Lord of Battles that you do not know."

"You have me pail ready by six," resumed the lad. "I'll come in then an' get me coat an' me boots on, an' hustle off afore there's any more fights between us. So long!"

He ran lightly through the snow, his bare

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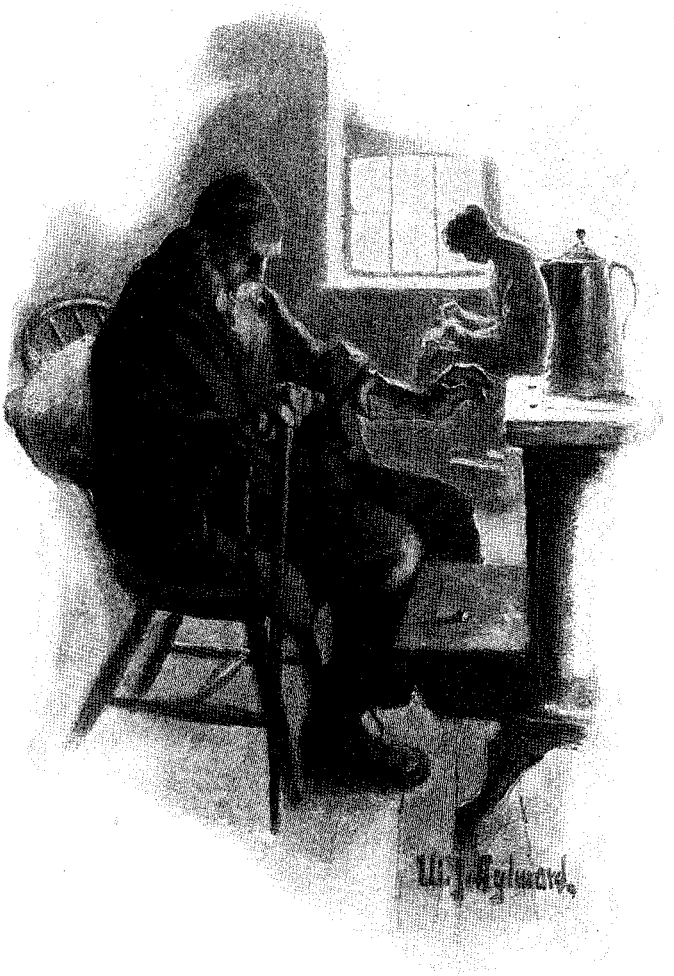
feet sinking to the ankle at every step. The Jewish woman watched him climb the fence and take shelter in a neighbor's kitchen; then she reëntered her own house.

Penagen mine lay at the head of an area of tilted strata. Its coal seams pitched at a sharp angle, and its main opening was a slope. The chimney-like small air-shafts over which the fans were hung had neither hoisting apparatus nor ladders; the Big Slope was thus the highway of travel in and out for all the veins, and the "intake" or fresh-air path for the lower workings.

Number 12 Lift was a steep east-and-west road, three thousand feet below the mouth of the mine, by vertical measurement eight hundred feet down. And on Number 12 Jim Eroh's crew were working, that night when Martin Swallow, the Polander boy, hoped to earn his promotion.



He cowered against the stove.—Page 187.

Martin worked snappily and well; and with eighteen miners cutting coal at once along the half-mile road his zeal was

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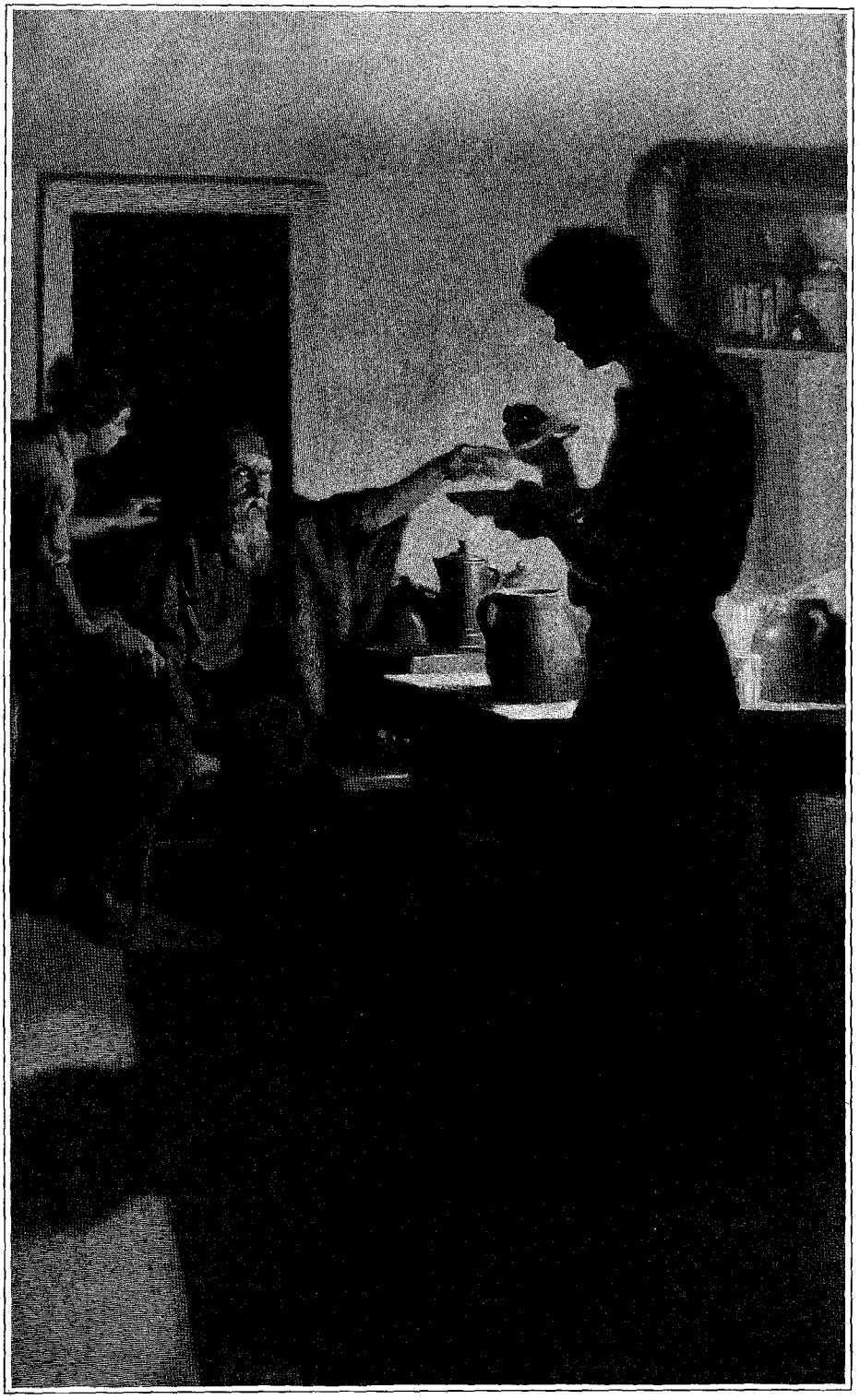

Drawn by W. J. Aylward.

"Go, out!" he ordered. "Go out! Out of my sight!"—Page 188.

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needed. His hitching and shifting hurried without orders; his care for latches and the rights of way avoided muddles. Jim Eroh, the boss's son, noted both brain and brawn with approval as the night wore along.

There came a lull in the work toward eleven o'clock. Most of the chambers had sent up their first and second loaded cars; the laborers smote slowly with their picks or idled as they piled the gob, killing time until the train crew brought them empty cars. Miners who had blasted down the night's allowance of coal were giving orders to their laborers; some, even, had started home. Others were lunching from their cans. A pleasant odor of tobacco lay along the air-current and spiced the fumes of oil and blasting powder.

Out where Number 12 Lift crossed the slope, Jim Eroh, Martin, and Saul Birklammer, the lead-boy, stood with their team, watching for a string of empties. The ropes on the bottom plane squeaked and hummed in the narrow darkness; the loaded trips went out toward daylight, four cars at a time, swinging up with a hideous roar. No empty cars came down.

"There ain't none," observed Saul, at last.

"The upper lifts is takin' all the empties on us on the third plane. There don't none get within smellin' distance of us before they're pinched."

"What d'you call smellin' distance?" young Martin demanded sharply of his chief. "Somethin's afire. Get it?"

"'Tain't nothin'. Hot axle, most likely. Or a hot pulley scorched a tie, up the planes. The air's comin' toward us here, comin' down: blows in our faces, like, the way we are now."

"I donno," spoke little Saul, the lead-boy. "Wouldn't we ought to go an' see?"

"It's kinda strong," Eroh agreed. Martin set off up the plane without more words. He ran, but the roughness of the track as well as the necessity of keeping free of the cables delayed his progress.

A light was coming toward him as he stumped along over the ties. The wearer of the dancing flame must have seen his lamp-glow, too; the pair hastened to meet. When they were but twenty yards apart a trip of empty cars descending drove them into niches of the wall for shelter.

As the cars passed him, scarce missing the buttons of his jacket, Martin Swallow sprang out and ran at top speed to meet the other light. Instinct told him that the man was bringing news; and already a minute had been lost. The smell of smoke was stronger; the wind of the fans sucked it against his face and made his eyes sting. The gangway was bitter cold.

"Hey! She's afire!" hailed the newcomer. He gasped agonizingly. Martin recognized "Asthma" Daley, a miner whose infirmity forbade his working in the lower levels. "The ss—slope. I found —it!"

"How far up?" the boy demanded.

"Just under 8 East.—I told 'em—there."

"Then it's hustle for ours, ain't it?"

"What's—workin'—further down?"

"Twelve East's full. Twelve West hasn't but three men an' a mule. Eleven's only day-shift. Nine an' Ten's old workin's—empty. I donno them. I never drove there; I belong on Seven mostly."

"You—tell—" Poor Daley's lungs gave out; his best was not enough to serve the need. Martin saw his hands beating the darkness in the pangs of his disease. He fell, writhing. The ditch received him, and the running water quenched his lamp-flame just as it singed his hair.

The driver knew nothing of asthma; the perils of the plane, however, were real and definite. He strained his hearty muscles to the utmost to lift the man and carry him up-hill to the recess which had sheltered him so recently. The place was a mere niche cut out behind the rib; the lad crumpled his patient with a mighty heave and jammed him in, knees uppermost.

"Don't ye stretch out," he warned the shuddering figure. "If a trip come down on ye, ye'd lose yer two feet.—Bide there. I'll tell the men to get ye, comin' out. I got to go."

Downward and inward raced the Jewish woman's son, the smoky wind at his back. Neither courage nor cowardice animated him. He was for the moment all brain—a leaping, flashing intelligence, scheming, balancing—mine-wise and cunning to plan.

. . . Number 12 was the deepest, newest lift; the second opening required by the mining law had never been cut down to meet it. The second opening ran through 10 East and 8 East, but unless the men knew the way it would be hard to find. The

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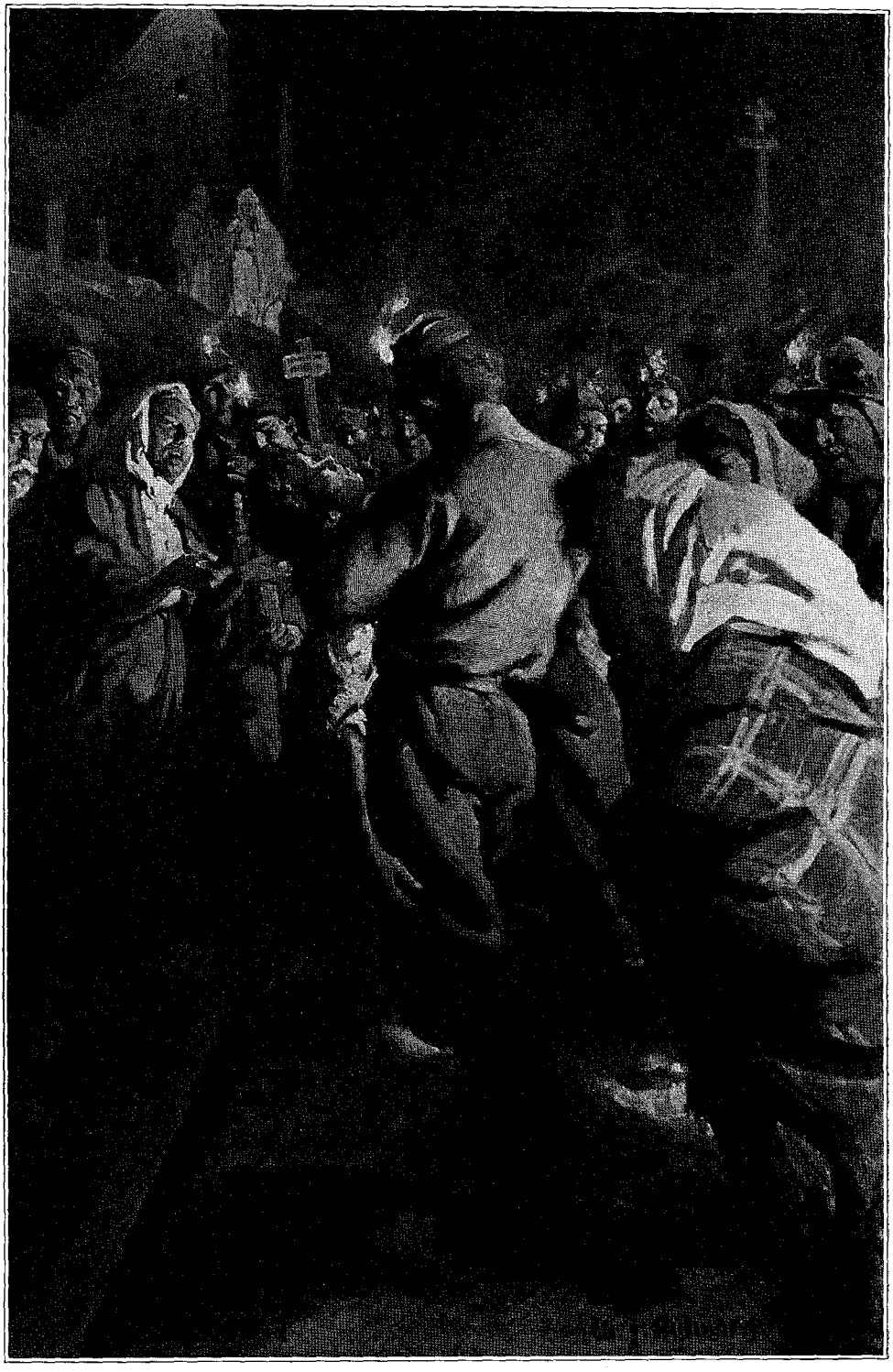

Drawn by W. J. Aylward.

"No. Let me take," said a woman's voice.—Page 196.

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slope was the one sure road out, if they could pass the fire before the narrow way reached broiling heat.

. . . Or supposing they could not make it in time to pass, there was only one thing to try, one way out of the rat-hole. Old 10 East lay about midway between 12 and the fire; it was disused, and so shut off from the active ventilating system of the mine. It would be full of explosive gas, so that the refugees would have to traverse it without lamps. Yet the slightness of its ventilation would make this lift comparatively free of smoke and sulphur for some hours.—The slope, then! Time was everything—life, safety, courage! The slope for its whole length if they could, with a dash through those few red-hot yards midway. The slope as far as old 10 East at any rate!

. . . Or if a man waited just too long in the rat-hole, and the draught carried down smoke and heat that were past breathing? —That? That meant slow smothering. They might shut all the air-doors and go into the last heading and wait with their lights out; but the air would go and the smoke would come, just as surely. The complicated system of airways by which the current was led in and out could not be altered in an hour.

Here was the door of old 10 East at his left, with a board nailed home to keep it closed. 11 East was like it. Then came a stretch of empty slate and sandstone for fifty yards, and the coal again—the bottom vein.

The foot of the plane with its switches, sidings, and footman's shanty was deserted—not a light blinked anywhere. The empty cars were gone, too, which meant that Jim and little Saul had hauled them out the lift to the impatient workmen.

Sixteen hours of labor had not weakened Martin; he took the up-grade gamely, pounding over the ties. At the first curve he saw lights ahead, shouted, and stopped them.

"Get onto yer job," Eroh ordered with the authority of nineteen. "You hadn't no business to lie down an' sleep, Mart, when you seen them empties pass you on the slope."

"The slope's afire. We got to get the men out quick."

"G'wan!" sneered little Saul.

"Jus' this side 8 East," the driver panted. "We got to tell 'em. Nobody else knows it but us. That there Daley told me, an' he lost his wind an' dropped on the plane like dead. He ain't told much of any, 'cause he run to warn the bottom vein. See? *We got to tell 'em!*"

Young Eroh considered a moment; he was the "runner," and as such the captain of his crew.

"All right," he agreed. "How bad is it? Got plenty of time, ain't we?—Kid, you unhook them mules; leave 'em loose."

"I smell sulphur, up aways; the coal's caught."

"It's got draught enough," the runner commented. He buttoned his heavy coat. "Come along. We'll say it's fire-boss's orders—they won't start for our say-so, 'cause the boys is always kiddin' greenies. —Saul, you beat it. Put for home. We don't need three."

"I ain't escairt," spoke the lead-boy valiantly. "I'll go with youse fellas!" Yet his lamp-flame trembled.

"Naw, I tell you," Martin Swallow interposed. "Leave him go up an' make sure 8 East has got Daley's word all right. He better get apast the fire as quick as he can, after. Their air splits off higher up, an' they might not smell it in quite a while, themselves."

"Correct," said the runner. He looked the little fellow over anxiously. "You do that, Birklammer. Keep to the main road till you get to 8 East. Don't turn off for nothin'. Remember you got to tell them men; an' then skoot for home."

Fourteen-year-old Saul gulped and blinked, but nodded. He turned and ran back toward the plane.

"Now!" said the runner. "I'll take the first ten places. You get the last six, 'cause you're a better sprinter than me. Fire-boss's orders, you say! Hustle 'em!"

"Tell 'em to look for Asthma Daley, goin' out," Martin called over his shoulder. "I chucked him in behind the rib."

Young Eroh was distanced at the first chamber; the driver went on alone.

In the first place he entered sat a laborer with one foot bared, hammering at the shoe between his knees.

"Slope's afire!" called Martin from the doorway. "Fire-boss says, skidoo! Take the slope. Make 10 East, anyhow—further if ye can."

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"So?" said the man coolly; and went on tapping the refractory nail.

"Ye'll burn in hell, if ye don't!"

"All right," the other nodded. "Anywhere you say."

"Tell yer butty, Dough-feet, an' get a swift move on!" roared the boy; and was gone, leaving the door open behind him. A drift of wood-smoke followed in and warned the cobbler more cogently than words.

The next chamber was empty. The third had a group discussing politics as they warmed their coffee by a fire of splinters on the floor. In the fourth place the miner stood far up the chute, drilling the breast to set another blast: he would not leave nor let his laborer go until the shot was tamped and ready.

The fifth room held an Italian comfortably asleep. The sixth and last chamber had two loaded cars and two laborers busily packing and pounding lumps to fill a third. The pair were Slovaks, understanding not three dozen words of English. Martin tried them in Russian, explaining breathlessly.

"Shuddup. You take cars," spoke one, when he had finished. The fellow pointed to the braided driver's whip hanging from the boy's belt. "You do job, eh? Take cars?"

Even in this distant corner of the workings the smoke gained on him, and the boy was desperate. Moreover, surging through the keen, practical brain of Martin Swallow, American and mule-driver, was the blood of men who valued their stolid peasants no higher than their farm beasts. Martin drew the whip and struck: then threw it down. With his bare hands he beat the patient twain, roaring Polish and English alternately.

Gestures, blows, and oaths sufficed at length. "Fire," "slope," "go quick," carried some meaning for the greenhorns; one said, "Yes, boss," and both picked up their coats to follow where he led.

They three were the last to run from 12 East Lift; the nearest lights twinkled far ahead as they made the plane foot. The smoke was infinitely worse in the main slope. Stout youngster as he was, Martin began to feel the clog of it in his windpipe: his knees ached with much running over ties, and he panted as his will drove him at the steep up-grade of the road.

After a score of painful yards the driver halted. 12 West—three men in 12 West Lift, whom nobody had warned!

"Go on!" he yelled at the two Slovaks, as they slowed to wait for him. "Go quick! Go quick!" He caught up lumps of coal from the runnel, and stoned his protégés to a smart trot.

Then for the second time he hurried to the bottom vein. Life—and clear starlight of the winter nights—the patience of his mother's eyes—all good things lay outside. But there was work to do. He turned his back upon them.

Down, down again. The foot of the long plane yawned black and big and empty. 12 West turned off here; the door from the slope had not been opened, and once inside the lift one breathed clean, fresh air. The boy ran faster.

The road was a short one, coming off at less than a right angle from the line of the plane; its chambers were not many. In one of the rooms the three men were together. One was whistling—which is a rare trick underground.

"It's them," said the driver, whispering to himself. "Listen at them! Talkin' English, all. No greenies——"

The three were laughing; their lights bobbed sociably together. Mart Swallow felt his tired heart leap at the friendly sight and sound.

The whistling stopped when the driver told his news. That rock-bound silence of deep workings seemed to narrow and close in upon them; the boy's rasping breath struck on their nerves.

"My God!" cried one. The second loosened his belt-buckle. The third did nothing. Panic, stark and intolerable, took all three and held them fast.

"We won't never make it," spoke the tallest, looking his mate in the eyes. "We'll try, but——"

"Ye won't if ye stay foolin'!" snapped the Jewish woman's son. He looked from face to face, and something gave him a feeling of acute nausea for an instant. His Slovaks yonder had been dolts; but they at least were men. What ailed these fellows?

"I've got five kids," said the one who had been whistling. "Come on, boys! Run for it. We'll try the chances. Five kids——"

They ran. Martin was standing in the doorway of the chamber, facing them. He

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turned and sprang into the black gangway to give them space to pass.

He ran ahead a few lengths; then he looked back. The lights were gone. They were not following him down the track. Where had the men gone? And why?

Far up the chambers to the left he heard footsteps running. For an instant he believed that fear had crazed all three; then, remembering how the block of coal lay between 12 West and the slope, he understood. The men had a short-cut through the chambers to the door out at the foot of the plane. They were fresh and strong, and in their first panic they had forgotten him—him to whose growing weariness a few rods counted so much. Well, he must follow the rails, and make what speed he could to overtake them.

A fatigue that was not wholly physical grew upon Martin as he stumbled forward on that outward journey. The unwritten law of the mines bids every man take risks himself to save his fellow-workmen. Good: but had he, the cripple's son, failed of this duty? Shame gnawed at his breast.

"Damn me if I'd leave me mule," sobbed Martin Swallow, gulping at the smoke, "like that! Like that!"

Behind him there waited Death, on which he scarcely spent a thought; and Darkness, which was so cruel and lonesome and empty that he fled on aching limbs before it. The three yellow lights were what lured him on as his strength lessened. Sometimes he saw them, sometimes he drew very near, again he lost ground.

Now he was out upon the main road once more; the smoke had thickened, thickened. The pace was fearful. The plane cables tripped him on the hill. Of time and place his senses took no more account. Only some steely thing inside him drove like an engine, forcing the pursuit. One must not lie down. Those lights were men; one must not stay alone.

Finally one of the three miners was just abreast of Martin. Two steps ahead another was half falling; and the third—he of the five kids—held up the staggering man. The smoke grew worse, and hot puffs struck one's face. So far, so far—where were they? Old 10 East was the place to leave the slope. Yet where was the door? It seemed to Martin that they must have passed it. He was dazed, smothering.

In spite of the wind, there was not air enough to breathe. Watching the lamps—the friendly little flames that drove off the creeping Dark—the boy saw them grow pale. One by one they wavered and went out. . . . The flame on his own cap-brim faded away to nothingness of black.

Walking—falling, creeping, and walking again—the four fought on. The Jewish woman's son was weakest; his great endurance had been overtaxed; there in the dark he caught at one miner's coat to hold himself upright. Twice he fell, snatching in time to pull himself to his knees. With the third tug, the wearer of the coat swung round and lunged at his unseen encumbrance. The lad went down under the blow. He barely felt the icy ditch-water trickle under his collar. After that, all was blank.

Out in the slope on the upper side of the fire-area bosses and men worked fast. The pumps which drained the mine were forcing water down three lines of hose. The fans in the air-shaft had been speeded to more revolutions per minute than their maker warranted them to stand, and the cold, fresh current sweeping down the slope fed the inner workings with a proportion of clean air even while it filled them with the densest smoke. Under this draught the fire burned momentarily hotter and farther; but considerations of damage were negligible so long as there were men inside.

Search parties waited in detachments just outside the ring of active fire-fighters. The burning road was by this time a gigantic broiling oven, a tunnel, red and glowing, as one looked down the wind to its interior.

No creature could endure for a breath amid that heat. Some of the first fugitives who had rushed it before the flame gained a tenth such headway had been badly hurt. The later refugees had abandoned the slope altogether; bosses and rescue parties had convoyed them by a long circuit through old 10 East and the second opening to the rear chambers of 8, and so out to the main road above the danger line.

Young Eroh, the boss's son, was standing with Hooley, the superintendent, counting off the roll as party after party assisted stumbling figures out of Number 8 roadway into the cold freshness of the plane. When the two Slovak laborers from 12 East

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gave their names and their miners' numbers, the list was closed for the bottom vein.

"All out?" echoed the listeners, with groans of relief. "*All out?*"

"No. My driver boy ain't," young Eroh answered. He was obliged to wet his scorched lips and control his throat before he continued. "Give 'im half an hour yet, Mart, can't you? Don't give it up. Don't change the air till then. He's a cool hand. Give 'im 'is chanst."

"An hour," said the boss—and turned his face away. "What's his name?"

"Swallow. Mart Swallow. He's them Polander people's only boy."

The runner took out his watch and held it in his palm, bending so that the light from his cap shone on the dial. Ten—eighteen minutes—twenty——

Three more men—those three forgotten men of 12 West—were carried bodily out through the gangway door and laid down to recuperate. Men earlier rescued sat beside them on the ties to chafe their ankles; others pumped the limp arms up and down.

One of the three, he of the five kids, groaned and tried to speak. Instantly Jim Eroh pounced on him.

"Where's the boy?" he roared. "Where's that boy? I bet 'twas him went for you, or you'd not be here now! Now, Mister, you put yer mind on what I'm askin'. Where's that driver?"

The man struggled to speak, but only one word formed itself intelligibly—"—slope——"

"We'll try for it," spoke the boss, who stood near enough to catch the word. "Once. No more. Two men is enough; me and Henry."

He took two lighted safety-lamps from the last rescue party. The fire-boss answered his nod. They two turned to follow the long round about path in one final search.

Up in the yard at the head of the slope women and children waited the night long. Guards held them back from the tunnel-mouth, and now and again restrained by force some cripple who would have gone down into the familiar workings to give his aid. The strong and whole-bodied, the workers of the settlement, were all inside, searching, building brattices, fighting the fire. Out in the night the helpless watchers held their ranks and waited.

Twice the authoritative statement came that all the missing had been found and carried out of danger. But mothers lingered, and little children. Some men, too, must see their kindred safe before they dared believe. Adam Suwaloff was among these. His lameness would not let him stand upright upon the slippery snow; he clung, child-fashion, to the arm of a strong neighbor woman, and Stasia, the Jewess, held his other hand.

At two o'clock there came to the ex-noble the thing for which he waited. Young Jim Eroh the runner stepped from the dim arch of the tunnel into the dim gray night. The lamp on his cap flamed back tasselwise in the draught. It showed the face of Martin on his shoulder, the big limp body of Martin trailing from his arms.

"He was the last one to come up to air," panted the bearer, as the crowd surged on him with inquiries. "Get back, can't you? He's only fainted; I'm takin' him to the engine-house where it's warm—Yes, I tell you—yes! The rest is all safe an' hearty. They're settin' right down there now till they gets a rest. Yes, ma'am, Shadrach's as well as you are. I just seen him. He's turnin' the hose onto some cross-ties. Leave me be, can't you, Missis? This fella ain't no 'alf-pound weight, an' I'm takin' him acrosst to the engine-house."

"No. Let me take," said a woman's voice, clear and firm. "I strong. I can carry."

"His mother," explained two or three at once. The Jewish woman stiffened her tall figure to the burden, and drew Martin's body from the other's hold. The boy's head fell back and his eyes unclosed.

"Just faintin'," explained Eroh for the second time. "He ain't burnt at all. An' he saved three men that was——"

Martin moved, and a sound came from his throat.

"He talk!" cried Stasia.

The runner bent down to hear, though scarce believing his own ears.

"What's that, Mart? Say it over."

"Three that was skunks," whispered Martin Swallow quite distinctly, "—skunks!" He threw an arm about his mother's neck and clung so to her before he slipped back into unconsciousness. The Jewish woman held him, smiling down at her burden as in his baby days. Young Eroh guided her across the breaker yard.

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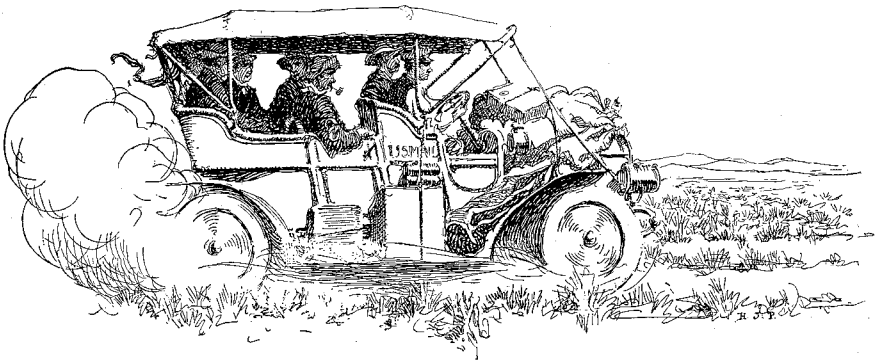

An automobile stage-coach.

THE GASOLENE PRAIRIE SCHOONER

By Walter E. Peck

Illustrations by Henry J. Peck

After a moment's pause at a small cluster of three or four frame buildings, announced by the brakeman as Torrance, the Golden State Limited has resumed its flight across the plain and is fast dwindling to a speck on the western horizon. The meagreness of habitation seems to emphasize the vastness and loneliness of the land. It is a scene suggestive of the proximity of some battered old stage-coach, which will presently rattle up to the platform of the little box-like "depot," to transport the waiting passengers and mail farther on their journey into the wilderness. Suddenly, from around the corner of the "hotel," the stage does appear, but its advent is unaccompanied with the traditional cracking of the whip at the lead horses. In fact, there are no horses to be cracked at, although the succession of short explosive sounds which emanate from the vehicle's glistening front tell of stored-up power equivalent to that of many horses. With a laconic "Good-mornin'" the stalwart driver jumps from the dusty and weather-beaten machine; mail-sacks and luggage are quickly secured on top of the hood and in any other space left available by the passengers, and with a honk, and a splutter of the engine, the mail-coach begins its trip across the plain to the distant town of Roswell.

Winding for a few miles through a scrubby growth of cedars, the road emerges into the open. A flock of several thousand sheep look with startled eyes as we rush by, while the Mexicano herder waves his hand. He is evidently becoming accustomed to the glittering carriage which charges by with such tumultuous speed in its invasions of his lonely territory. Farther on, there is a brief stop at the long, low ranch-house of stone to leave a mail-bag and take on a dark-visaged, tall-sombreroed passenger, and we are away again. The white dusty trail stretches ever to the far horizon, marking the path of modern civilization through these arid wastes of mesquite and cactus, which have remained unchanged from the time when savage Indians ranged through them supreme, in their migrations and buffalo hunts. Clear and invigorating is this New Mexican air, and the distant mountains look alluringly blue through the glare of sunlight. Prairie dogs scuttle for dear life from before the flying monster and bob away over the sandy hummocks.

Smoothly and swiftly runs the engine for miles, but at length something goes wrong. There is a jar, a hurried application of

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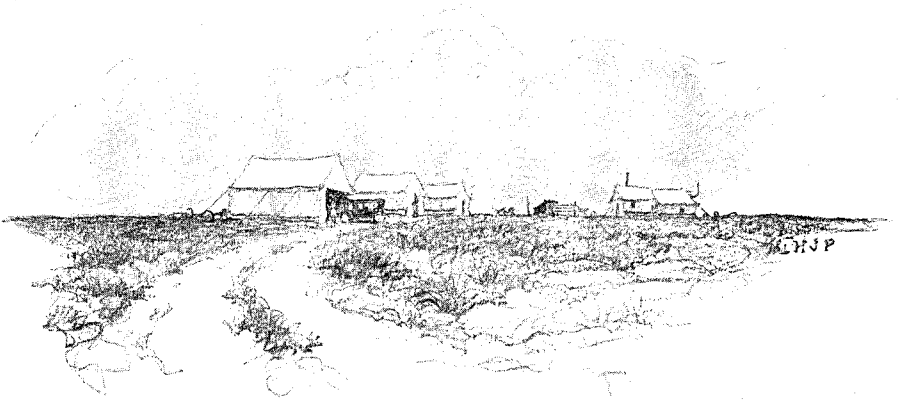
brakes, and the erstwhile flying car squats clumsily in its tracks, an inert weight of complicated mechanism. Straightway mail-sacks and grips are tossed to the ground, and judging from sundry muttered ejaculations, Smyrle, the driver, conducts an unsatisfactory investigation of the inner workings of the machine. The native passengers are consumed with ennui, although they would possibly not so phrase the state of their feelings, and doubtless they draw disgusted mental comparison between such a dashed method of locomotion and their



Camp Needmore.

accustomed horse-flesh. And on a near-by tuft of buffalo grass sits an insolent prairie dog, exhibiting every sign of derisive satisfaction at the turn affairs have taken.

A half hour's delay in the beating sun seems a much longer time, but at length with the aid of tool-kit and baling-wire, Smyrle succeeds in coaxing life back into the machinery, the mail is repacked, and the resumed motion of the car, swifter than before, to make up time, soon restores the temporarily suspended feeling of exhilaration. Moved from his earlier reticence by the late unpleasantness, Smyrle descants upon the advantages and disadvantages of the mail-route. A day of circuitous railway travel is saved by this dash across the plain by automobile. Although ordinarily the pace is swift, considering the nature of the country traversed, the mail has been carried over the line under pressure in two-thirds of the schedule time; and in the parlance of Smyrle, "That was going some!" We gather from his conversation, whose soft characteristics bear out his self-confessed "Texican" origin, that the dwellers in New Mexico are usually blessed with fine weather, although they do "get it" at times, and "get it right." The previous November the mail route fell into the grasp of a blizzard, an extraordinary circumstance. A car, with several passengers and sacks of mail, was stalled in a snow-bank a score of miles from the half-way camp, for thirty-six hours. Fortunately a box of "grub" destined for camp was aboard, and there was plenty of snow as a thirst-quencher. But at best it was a cold camp, and the half-frozen passengers joyfully welcomed the advent of "Old Huldy," the baggage car, and the crew, who finally shovelled their way to the rescue.

Rain is infrequent at any season, but is perverse enough to come occasionally just when the road outfit has spent a week or two in laboriously dragging the road and putting it into condition, which forthwith becomes a sad state of sloppiness and mud, a source of much trouble to the cars. "But wet or dry," says Smyrle, "we have to hop to it to get the mail through in each direction on time, or risk a penalty from the Government." There is always the possibility, although fortunately of rare occurrence, of irreparably breaking down along the way, and then waiting until the non-arrival of the car at its destination, pointing to trouble, starts a "wrecker" out to find the disabled machine and tow it in. In the meantime the passengers can amuse themselves shooting at the coyotes and prairie dogs, or a possible antelope; or in the absence of such game, must be content

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Drawn by Henry J. Peck.

A break-down.

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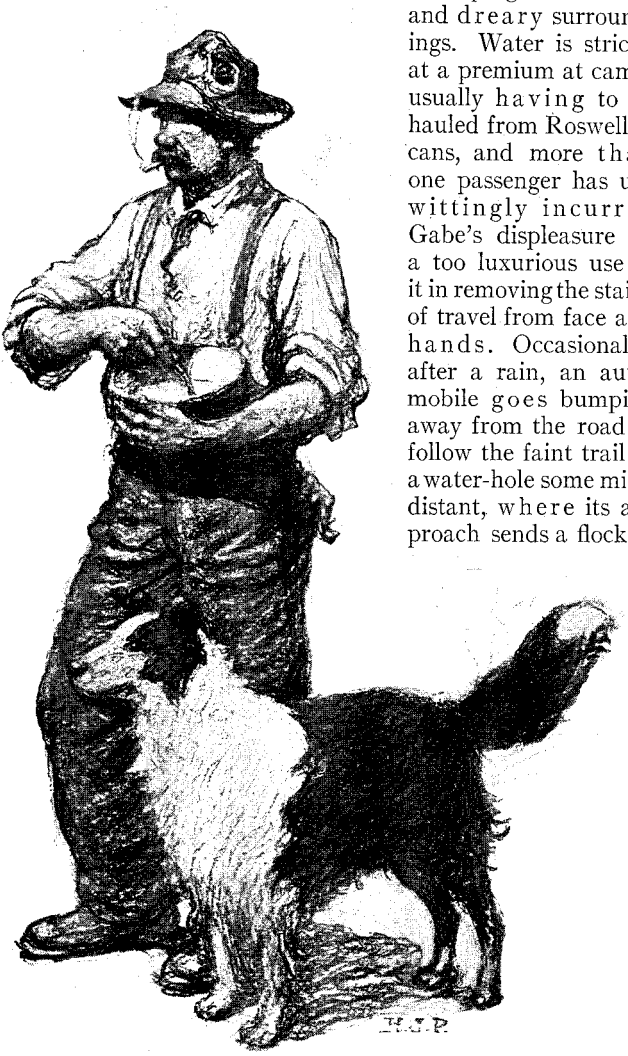
to make targets of one another for their anecdotal volleys. A broken rear axle, and a camp overnight in the open is not an unheard-of occurrence, and judging from our driver's description, a not intolerable experience. The mail-car usually carries at least a canteen of water, young rabbits are plentiful and their meat appetizing, especially when broiled in the starlight over a fire of mesquite brush. The ground, supplemented by cushions from the car, makes a comfortable bed, the climate is a stranger to colds, and the distant howl of the coyote wafted through the silence of the plains, a soothing lullaby— "But," added Smyrle, "you-all should have seen the tarantula I killed next mornin'."

So we rush on with undiminished speed. On the farthest ridge's crest, over which the road winds ribbon-like, the sun touches a glimmering spot of white; which is lost as we sweep down the slope, to reappear from the next rise a group of tents outlined against the sky. "Yonder's 'Camp Needmore,'" says the chauffeur, and a little later stops his machine by the largest tent of the little group which huddles in the midst of the great plain. In front of one of the tents, from which emanates a most tantalizing odor, a man in shirt sleeves and sombrero, with a collie dog, has been watching our approach. This man is "Gabe" Thompson, at once the mayor, sheriff, dog-catcher, and, excepting various live stock, the aforementioned collie, a cow and a tobacco-chewing billy-goat, the entire permanent population of "Needmore." His jovial greeting, "Come in, ladies and gentlemen, this supper's all ready," requires no repeating; and soon quantities of delicious frijoles, stewed grapes, ham and eggs, and steaming biscuits are being satisfactorily discussed within the tent, and we heartily endorse Smyrle's sentiment that "this supper sure is a plumb good one."

This half-way camp, in its loneliness and isolation from the haunts of men, seems to have been dropped from nowhere into this primeval spot. The extra car or two, and gasolene tank in the automobile tent, lend an incongruous touch of modernity to a place which otherwise in its primitiveness is in keeping with the wild and dreary surroundings. Water is strictly at a premium at camp, usually having to be hauled from Roswell in cans, and more than one passenger has unwittingly incurred Gabe's displeasure by a too luxurious use of it in removing the stains of travel from face and hands. Occasionally, after a rain, an automobile goes bumping away from the road to follow the faint trail to a water-hole some miles distant, where its approach sends a flock of



Gabe.

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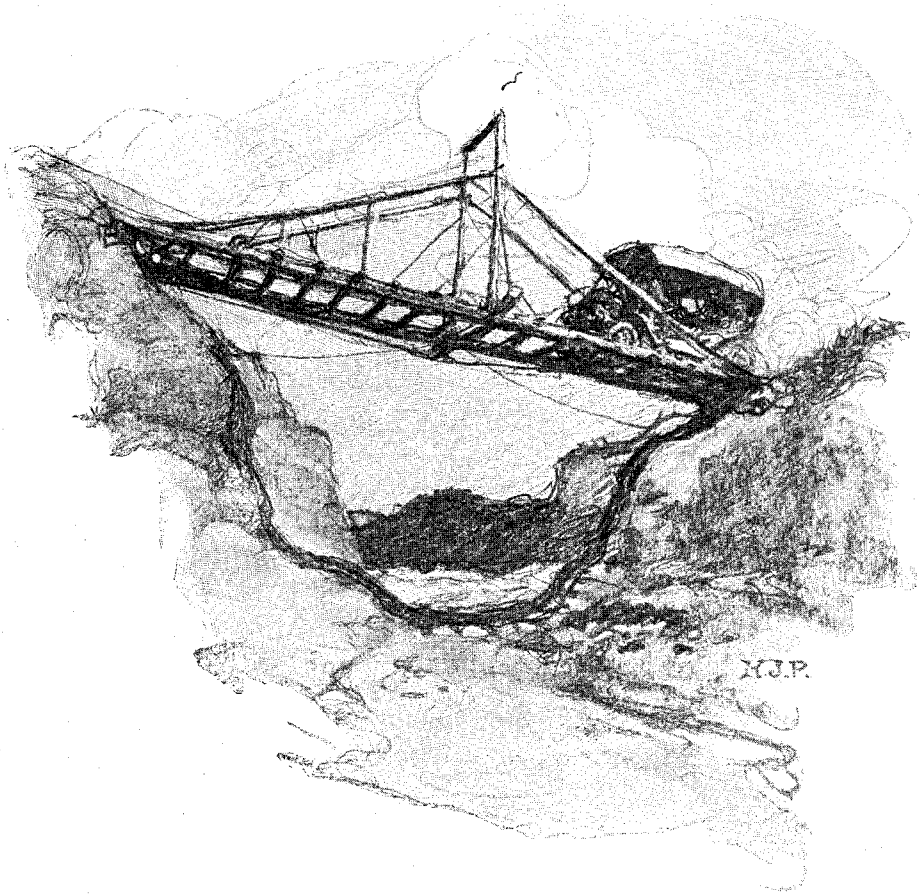

The Macho Bridge.

startled sheep rushing from the water. With cans full of the precious, albeit muddy fluid, the car departs, leaving the sheep to cautiously reassemble in the pool and continue their occupation of "tanking up."

A violin hangs from a peg in the cook-tent; and some poker chips and well-thumbed cards sprawled on a box in a corner indicate that "Camp Needmore" is not without its diversions; an impression borne out by the conversation of Gabe, Smyrle, and "Conkey," the chauffeur who is to take us on to Roswell, and whose begrimed condition suggests recent and intimate association with some machine in the auto tent. "Thirty minutes for refreshments" being accomplished, the mail is transferred to a machine, evidently old in the service, and encrusted, as to wheels and guards, with a lumpy coating of dried mud. This is Conkey's charge, and as an introduction to its particular merits and virtues he relates how a former driver, one "white-headed Johnson," burnt the car up as a result of filling the gasolene tank by lamplight! It was repaired in the auto company's shop, and with 75,000 miles to its credit in something over two years, is still chugging away on its daily trips.

We bid good-by to Gabe and Smyrle, and are off again, the camp cow regarding us ruminatively for a moment, and the collie vigorously barking a send-off for some distance down the road. Smaller and smaller grow the tents in retrospect until they shrink to a mere speck against the sky, which finally dissolves into the infinitude of space. "Red-sand Draw" and "Mail-box Flat" are passed, the engine working rhythmically without a miss, and the summit of the "Big Divide" is half gained when our chauffeur brings the car to a sudden

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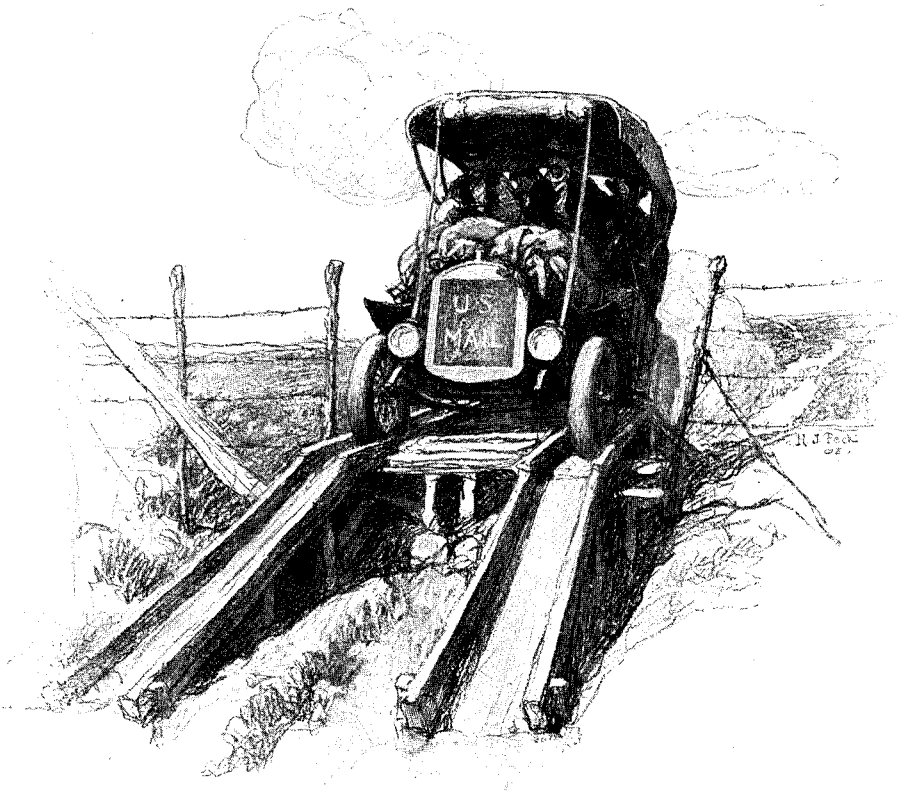

The cattle-guard.

stop exclaiming, "Coyote!" A short distance away the "long, lean, lank, and sorry-looking skeleton" stands regarding us and, too late remembering important business elsewhere, his career is brought to a tragic end by Conkey's rifle, and he is ingloriously scalped, for there is a bounty on his head.

The crest of the divide reopens the broad vista of country, and as the descent is begun, Conkey remarks casually, as if he were in town and saw an acquaintance approaching along the street, "Here comes Charlie!" At this juncture, however, "Charlie" can be descried only as an infinitesimal patch upon the snaky trail in the far distance. Twice or thrice he is lost behind the intervening hills, and finally pulls up alongside with a cargo of mail, and Mexican sheep-shearers in the "Yellow Kid," a monster car of the mail-route company's own construction. We get word that "Old Huldy" is somewhere on the road with a load of baggage for Torrance, and provisions and "gas" for camp; accordingly we pull out with the prospect of another meeting en route.

At the foot of a long descent, the approach to the Macho Bridge fills the timid passenger with apprehension. The slender precarious-looking truss affair, with its narrow wheel tracks, seems little calculated to keep the car from a plunge into the dry gorge which yawns menacingly below. But Conkey takes it surely, nonchalantly even, and as he increases the speed for the up-hill rush on the other side, intimates that in time of flood the turbid, roaring torrent, rushing and foaming beneath the bridge, inspires in the unaccustomed traveller even more nervous and apprehensive tremors. Beyond the hill, a vast expanse of flat country and consequent evenness of road tend to neutralize the unsettling effect of the gorge. Presently here is another surprise, and an apparent, although less disconcerting cause for a decorous approach. A barbed-wire fence confronts us, which, extending to the van-

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ishing point in either direction, seems to divide the entire plain. Our speed scarcely slackens as we draw near; there is a fleeting impression of two trough-like inclines which the wheels take as unerringly as a locomotive keeps the rails; a sensation of rising quickly and dropping again to the level, and we have climbed a fence! Conkey explains that this sensational jump has landed us in Ballard's ranch by means of a "cattle-guard," which, while it keeps the cattle in, obviates the necessity of a gate and a halt for the automobile.

It is nearly a dozen miles across the "pasture" to the other cattle-guard. As we sweep along, bunches of cattle, startled from their grazing, after a wild look at the strange invading monster, turn tail and gallop away. Midway of the distance we come upon a stranded automobile, resting its dray-like proportions under a huge load of trunks, boxes, and cans. "Old Huldy" is evidently suffering from tire trouble, and Conkey is just in time to "he'p" the sweating driver out of his difficulties. "The old girl ain't very 'pretty for *nice*,' but she will carry a big load and can sure hit the trail when she gets started," Conkey assures us as we resume our journey. A mail-bag is thrown off at "Ballard's" a house, a windmill, two or three trees, and a little patch of green grass. At sight of us a cowboy's pony rises on its hind legs in dismay. Across "Salt Crick," around the foot of a hill, and the ranch's other boundary fence is taken gracefully, surely. Far to the right the El Capitan Mountains loom mysteriously through the haze of the declining sun, whose slanting rays bathe the arid land's scrubby growth in a mellow radiance.

A few miles more and the plain and its barrenness are behind us. By some quick transition we are descending into shady streets and the pleasant evidences of civilization, a grateful contrast to the simmering heat of the open. This is Roswell, a beautiful little city of the Pecos Valley, and at the post-office a placard bearing the roughly lettered legend "The Auto is not In," is removed from the window as the expectant gathering sees the dust-covered passengers extricate themselves from the tonneau, while the mail is unloaded—on time.

Cattle turn tail and gallop away.

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Drawn by A. Castaigne.

A hot morning, the road lay deep with dust—a trial race.—Page 205.

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AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

BY JAMES B. CONNOLLY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. CASTAIGNE

VI

IN anticipation of the needs of Greek youth who might wish to take part in the coming Olympic Games, there had been installed at Athens this physical director, already met, as has been described, by Loues and Gouskous, a man acquainted by reason of long residence in other countries with the training methods of the world's greatest athletes; and it was this director who announced one morning that thereafter the candidates for the games were to be overlooked in their exercises by a Board of Judges, and that after another ten days the squad would be reduced to such as were considered of good merit; and therefore that it behooved all to prosecute their exercises with the rigor and skill and self-denial worthy the dignity and importance of the occasion; and that all would have need of every ounce of strength and every shade of skill, for there were coming from all parts of the world great athletes to contend for the unsurpassable glory of the celebration; and further, in a sonorous voice, the director read from the *Echo* of that morning the names and residences of the foreign athletes who had announced their intention of coming: Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, England, America, and even far-away Chile and Australia.

The reading of the list cast a chill over many; even Gouskous, the self-confident, was subdued. "Truly, Loues, here are mighty men coming to contend with us." And that day in the Stadium bore himself with solemnity.

Accordingly—thoughtlessly, joyously or seriously—each to his nature prepared for the trials which were to determine who would finally represent the nation.

On the tenth day there was great anxiety as the director, when the exercises of the day were done, announced in the order of their event the names of those who had won approval of the judges. Gouskous was among the successful ones; indeed his was the first name read for the discus-throwing and weight-lifting; but the entries for the Marathon race were not to be announced until after a trial to be held within the week.

On the morning of that trial Loues could partake of no breakfast, but set out with his companions and arrived with something like a burning fever in his veins. He had been unable to sleep the night before, and felt weak in body as well as dispirited in soul. His mind was not at peace. Not since that discomposing day when he was discharged from the Army had he had sight of Marie. Euripides, who had since come twice to Athens to see him, could or would give him no word; and Loues chose to put a hopeless interpretation on his silence.

But even in his weakness Loues, reproaching himself as a man lacking courage, goaded himself to the test which was the last on earth he would have selected for that particular day; and yet, despite what his will would do for him, the dark feeling of despair was not to be driven away.

A hot morning, the road lay deep with dust. Everything seemed to conspire against Loues, who had hoped for a cool wind laden with dampness to keep the dust from his lungs, which seemed as if they were on fire within him; but it was not to be. The race was begun and completed, and Loues was almost nowhere. Only on the last kilometre was it, that torn apart with pain and dread, shame and fear, hope and despair, he gathered himself for a burst that carried him past those competitors who would have intervened to prevent him from securing a place on the judge's list; but immediately he crossed the finishing line he sank to the ground.

It was Gouskous who caught and bore his failing body from the track. "Courage, my Loues, courage." As the athletes said

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of him, "A fine friendly nature, a great heart, Gouskous—you should know him." When Loues was somewhat recovered and was able, with the supporting arm of Gouskous, to make his way to the dressing-room, it was the great-souled Gouskous who all the while encouragingly talked to him. "Most marvellous indeed was it, Loues, to see you get the place. Such an effort! 'His heart will burst,' I exclaimed—did I not, Touferes? Only this morning, when I saw you, so pale and distressed, set forth for the tremendous exertion, I shook my head and it was Touferes again to whom I said—was it not, Touferes? 'Poor Loues, all last night he tossed in pain and now in extreme weakness he goes forth to run.' Think of it—nothing to eat since the evening before! Ps-st! but how a man can do anything on these empty stomachs is most amazing. For me, I cannot lift a little finger in the morning until after I have abundantly breakfasted. It is too painful altogether. But you, Loues, notwithstanding my calamitous predictions, went forth and you are named among the qualifying runners. 'Twas sublime—hah, was it not, Touferes? and so I say, courage, my Loues, courage. It is true you are yet behind Vanitekes, who has trouble to conceal his pride and joy; but to-day I even heard the director saying as you approached the goal—said he, and pointed you out to his associates, 'Observe that lad. He will be of the chosen ones. There is that in his features which tells me he needs but the occasion to do a great deed.' Yes, so he said, Loues. And so take heart, and be prepared, when the great trial comes."

An observing man altogether, that director. That afternoon, after the athletes had lunched and were resting, he said to Gouskous: "Your friend Loues is a promising lad, but he should be encouraged. He does not think enough of himself."

And a wise man also that, for later, when Loues, now partly rested, was reclining on a row of seats in the Stadium, to him came the director, and questioned him as to his previous practice in the way of running. He was a sympathetic man, to whom, seeing that he listened with interest, Loues related the habits of his earlier days, of the days which he had spent in pursuit of game, flying hot-foot from dawn to dark down the declivities, or surmounting laboriously the steeps; and of the nights when he had found himself so far from any habitation that he would make his bed in the open, in the morning bathing himself in the nearest sheet of water, or, it might be, refreshing his body in the dew of the grass. Further, under the encouraging comment of the director, he told of his life in the Army; how when they were camping in the country, in Thessaly at one time, far from cities and regular lines of travel, he had been called upon by the commander to carry messages for long distances. "And they used to call me then Ergoteles."

"Why?"

"Euripides—he is my godfather—tells me that Ergoteles was four times crowned victor in the long race in the ancient games."

"Ha? Go on."

"And that for him the great Pindar composed a most moving ode, and that when he returned to Himera they breached the walls about the city that he might not have to enter through the gate used by the ordinary citizen, and that, further, they raised to him a statue in the market-place, as was also done in the groves of Olympia in honor of his unrivalled prowess, and a pension for life was his, and he died in great honor."

The director's eyes sparkled, and he drew the lad's arm within his own. "Stay by us, Loues, for surely you are possessed of the true spirit. They are to be many, the chance is slight among them all; but who knows, my Loues, that you shall not win?"

An astute man also the director. That evening, after all had dined together, in a building set apart for that purpose, midway between the ancient temple of Theseus and the Stadium, and from the windows of which the athletes might gaze their fill on the ruined but ever-glorious Acropolis, he turned to Loues and said, "Have a care for your friend Gouskous. A very Milo of Crete for strength, and in size equal to that Diagoras, after whom he is so often called, but he must be restrained. But for my watchful eye he would have awhile ago gone to the cask in the cellar and helped himself. He may have all the food he craves, but restrain him if you can in his absorption of wine."

A politic man likewise: To Vanitekes he said, "They did not name you The Goat without reason. On you I doubt not will

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rest the honor of upholding the fame of Greece." And to all he said aloud, "From henceforth we must not fail to train faithfully."

At the table that evening there had been some mirth, largely because of Gouskous, who had become disgruntled. "There, now," he complained, "one measure of wine! A single measure of wine without a single measure of discrimination. Constantine there—estimate now on the bulk of his shrimp-like body. He weighs now—how much? Fifty kilograms? So it is. And I—one hundred and forty kilos. It is true. Yet we get the same ridiculous apportionment. He as much as will drown him if he be not careful, and I, Gouskous, the strong man of our fleet, who has posed for Hercules in the charades, I get no more than what will sprinkle the membrane of my parched stomach, not to speak of the palate and throat which must be assuaged on the way down."

VII

Loues had now and again seen Euripides during these days of preparation for the festival, and from him had been getting all the neighborly gossip of Marousi; of all but her of whom he was most desirous to hear. And the suspense was affecting him to such an extent that one night he conceived that he could bear it no longer. He would go to Marousi; and because he feared that the director would attempt to hinder him and protest it was a violation of training rules, an imperilling of his chances in the race, he informed no one at the training quarters of his intention.

Not even Gouskous did he tell; this that the gigantic one might be able to say truthfully in the morning that he knew not where his friend was; and if of his intended action he spoke no word to his friend, be sure he told him nothing of what was in his heart and mind.

But Gouskous was not to be overreached. As Loues was about to drop from the window the big man suddenly awakened from an apparently profound sleep and grasped his nether leg.

"Ps-st, be not alarmed! It is only Gouskous. I have been observing thee for several days past. To-night I said to myself, he will do it."

"Do what?"

"Ss-s-st! I know not—I care not, whatever it is. But I have a suspicion." He laid a finger to his beard and smiled roguishly. "And I would advise thee. Our ship lay three weeks in the roadstead at Bombay and there was one ashore, Loues, as would have— Ah, Loues, the purple days of youth! And overboard I stepped one night—and ruined such a magnificent uniform! Never again did it fit me. And such a tale of accident and adventure as I had to concoct on my return next day! Old Homer himself reeled his recitation out no more smoothly, I'll warrant. And it fitted in all its parts—my story—as—ah-h, if only my blue uniform fitted half so well! But not a word would any one believe, not a word. Ho, ho! Ho, ho! from the youngest apprentice to the Admiral himself. And now, great heart, shall I stand by the window for you? And at what hour? And if you're not returned in time, what shall I say, Loues? Let us agree on a story in case they question us apart. For these objectionable and mostly useless superiors—they do ask questions at times."

All this Gouskous was whispering, but with one detaining arm that would have held back a team of struggling horses. "What shall I tell them if you are not returned by morning, my Loues—and I doubt you will be, because one may drop from a window of this height more easily than he can climb into it—even if you are in a mind to return in time, which is much to be doubted. Ha, you will—good Loues, do think of it. What shall I say in the morning when they ask? It is always one of two reasons, and for you one does not exist. As sparing as any ascetic are you of the wine. And so what girl's name is to be shielded—for so it must be—what else?—they will believe so anyway and at once cast about to identify her. Hah, what—don't mistake—I mind not the hot blood of youth if sometimes it bursts bounds, but consider, great soul, consider the work before you—and it is on such as you, not on great-bodied boasters like myself on whom the final honor will fall."

Loues had paused, not to conjure a picture of himself enwrapped in that final honor, but to picture his comrades gathered about the table and of those careless or malicious ones who would only too freely and

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eagerly pass that word of comment which no girl's name should be allowed to sustain.

Gouskous under the half-light of the night that came from outside, noted the hesitation, even though he misread the motive for it. "Ah, Loues, great soul, but a little sacrifice for now. Stay to-night and to-morrow matters will be clearer. To-morrow the foreign athletes come in large numbers, and by them we will pattern anew, and mayhap discover new devices for our training."

And Loues stayed. And next day the first of the foreign athletes arrived, and from them, as Gouskous had predicted, they learned many things of value. From the American, from one American particularly, Loues learned an important point in training.

The occasion was when Touferes, after noticing his American, French and Irish rivals leaping, began to comment to Loues on his own chances. Sighing, he observed, "They are stags, Loues. I fear that the glory of Greece is to remain unsung for all of me."

"And as for me, also, I think. But the race is yet to be run, and I shall not take their looks for it."

"No, nor will Vanitekes. Look. He watches them all like eagles. Only to-day he said: 'I have learned something,' even in the dressing-room awhile back, and through me he asked all manner of questions of the foreigners. He will profit by to-day's practice. The matter of foot covering was not lost on him, Loues. He will be hard to beat."

"Yes," answered Loues, slowly. "Very hard. And yet it will be a great satisfaction if he wins, for then also it will be Greece that wins."

The particular American who had taken a great fancy to Loues, now observing the expression on the young Greek face, inquired of Touferes what it was that Loues was concerned about, whereat Touferes, the linguist, translated; whereon the American carefully comparing Vanitekes and Loues as the two stood not far apart, said, "Why, that other is a horse. He is of a strong, course fibre, built for long, steady, unrelieved labor; but your friend is so much more delicately adjusted—strong also, but so much less gross. He probably does not allow in his training for the extra strain imposed by his more active brain and more ardent soul. That other, as I say, is the work-horse and your friend the thoroughbred. Don't let the other wear him down. He is made, your friend Loues, for less frequent but more supreme efforts. Tell him to ease up in his work."

And it was as much because of this advice as of his example that Loues changed his mode of practice; so that instead of running as formerly every day; except Sunday, of course, and each day as far as his system would endure, he now ran only on alternate days and varied the distances. Thus on Tuesday he ran, say, sixteen kilometres, ten miles, on the road, eight kilometres out from the city and back; on Thursday perhaps thirteen kilometres, and on Saturdays, his hard task, twenty-four kilometres. On days between he might walk the seven kilos to the beach at Phaleron, and there lie almost naked in the sun; or if it were a particularly enticing day, take a quick dip in the sea, allowing himself to dry off in the warm sand. Having had always a passion for air, sun, and water, this mode of life seemed to answer perfectly the needs of his nature. He could not say that his speed was increasing, but he felt himself waxing strong as a young lion, which added much to his confidence, and yet he began to feel almost nervous lest the augmented power should pass from him ere the great day arrived.

Now, during all this time of trial and diversion, Loues had been to Marousi but once, and then went on an off-day, in lieu of a walk to Phaleron, and with the express permission of his director, ostensibly to see Euripides in the matter of new shoes for the race, but really more to see Marie. He did not see Marie, but he came away with a pair of shoes of the softest and most flexible kid, patterned after those of the American, and which fitted his feet as gloves fit a lady's hands. It was with these shoes in his hands that he had called at Marie's home, trusting that she would admire them; but he got only a gruff word from her father at the gate, and, despite the beautiful shoes, came away disconsolate.

VIII

THE great festival was drawing near; the athletes were becoming more careful in their training. At last the morning of the first day of the games was on Athens.

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The city was alive with visitors. A hundred thousand strangers were within her gates. One may imagine what a commotion that created in the ancient city. At this time of the year, in the late spring, there were always great crowds of people from all the world over, but now the fame of the Olympic Games had perceptibly increased the usual number of tourists. People who otherwise might have stayed a few weeks longer in Turkey, Egypt, Italy or the Holy Land, had hurried to Athens for the Olympic festival.

English and Americans were particularly prominent, the English men and women in overheavy loose-fitting clothes, and the Americans eager, rushing everywhere, with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of energy —likewise of money. They had but to see a thing—a trinket, a relic, a bit of sculpture, to demand at once the price and immediately to buy. Of course many things were not to be bought, and they would ask, "Why not? why not?" impatiently. Many of them seemed not to understand that even an unlimited purse is not always potent. They were wearing now in their lapels little flags of their country, and whenever a group of them assembled they were challenging one another to wagers on the chances of this or that competitor in the games.

Sixty thousand people crowded the seats and walks of the Stadium this day; another sixty thousand, it was estimated, crowded the hills which rose above the walls of the enclosure. First there were the trial heats of the short race, a little more than one-half the length of the Stadium. One after the other, in the trial heats, the Americans, as was expected, came in victorious, except in the case of one German and one Australian. None of the Greeks secured a place for the final heat, to be run next day, and this largely because they were not sufficiently trained in the little details that count for so much in a race that is barely of ten seconds' duration.

After the running came the triple leap, the ancient contest at which in olden days the wonderful Phaylos excelled. In the trials it was the American, a Frenchman and the Greek, Touferes, who led. Hoping against hope for Touferes, the Greeks awaited painfully the further results; but all their prayers availed not; possibly—who knows—as one said, possibly for the American prayers even as fervent were offered. However it was, at the last trial the American won, and then ensued a scene for which, to have the honor to fall on one of themselves, hundreds of Greeks there felt that they would gladly offer up their lives.

The moment it was declared that the American had won, his name was elevated, the consolidated band broke into the first notes of the "Star-Spangled Banner," and at the same instant the flag of his country, beautiful with the alternate bright stripes of red and white and the little stars against the blue field, rolled and unrolled against the sky of Greece. The band continued to play, and everywhere the people cheered, while the countrymen of the victor, every one seemingly, mysteriously produced a small copy of that great ensign and waved it frantically aloft.

"How proud he should feel, that American," breathed thousands of throats fervently, and doubtless he did, the first winner, after fifteen hundred years, of an Olympic championship. But there was small chance to see how he took it, proud enough though he doubtless felt, for he no more than waved his hand to a group of his countrymen ere he disappeared into the tunnel which led to the dressing-room.

And now entered Gouskous to contend in the discus-throwing. The rules were such as the Grecian officials conceived governed the contest of old. A designated attitude was assumed, and from that pose, with one forward stride within the square, the disc was hurled. From the first the enormous force of Gouskous was apparent. Apparently without pause or premeditation he grasped the disc, assumed position, and, with no more than a quick glance around and before, cast the missile from him. His lack of skill was evident, but his superior strength was believed sufficient to offset that, especially when the American, his chief opponent, seemed to be casting the disc also unskilfully to one side. A great gain would have resulted could either have succeeded in throwing accurately down the centre line of measurement.

On the last try Gouskous heaved most valiantly, and a mark at least a metre beyond all others resulted. The audience was jubilant, and the name of Gouskous re-echoed resoundingly throughout the Stadi-

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um. The American was yet to throw, but no one anticipated a greatly improved performance, and so the officials made no concealment of the plaque bearing the name of Gouskous which they were about to elevate, nor of their own blue-and-white flag which was about to be hoisted triumphant. But the American had not yet thrown. And now in his preparation was seen evidence of that which was making his nation so great. He was not to be shaken in his preparation by the cheers of the tens of thousands for the victorious Gouskous. Calmly he took position and coolly surveyed the prospect. His eye seemed to remain glued on a point far down the centre line. At the instant of execution a panic seized the Stadium. Suppose he should throw so accurately that the disc would sail straight down the centre line? Which was exactly what he did. No waste whatever in the cast—Gouskous was astoundingly beaten. The populace, in time, almost philosophically accepted their defeat. As one paper next morning put it: "Ah, well might the Americans say that their mixed blood was welding a nation that is to be invincible in time. Their vitality to-day in the games is but symbolical."

But at the moment the Greeks were inconsolable. Again the American flag aloft, again the cheers of the victor's countrymen, again their voices ringing as the superb band played the strains of their national hymn.

Gouskous mingled in the joy of the victors—he could not help it—they were generous foes; but gloom was creeping on the Greeks, a gloom which deepened when at the end of the second and third days they had still no victory to the credit of their nation. And the night of that third day of defeat brought to Loues a feeling that he could no longer combat.

Still no sight of Marie, whom he now felt was lost to him; especially as Vanitekes, with whom he had yet to exchange his first word of greeting—Vanitekes had become unbearably insolent in his manner. It was true—all Greece said that on Vanitekes rested the hopes of the nation. But there was more than that to Loues. There was something in his rival's expression, or so he imagined, which was not to be accounted for by the admiration of the populace alone.

That night, when Loues was with his compatriots at the training quarters, when he should have been asleep, he suddenly left his cot, and silently dressed himself. There was now no zealous friend to restrain him. Gouskous, his period of abstemious training past, was in the hands of his friends that night, had been for three nights now, explaining to them how it came about that his great arm did not win the undying glory for his country.

The mind of Loues dwelt not now on what interpretation might be placed on his flight. One more day, another night and it would be the morning of Marathon—they would be too engrossed in that to reflect overmuch on his absence. After all who was he? But one of sixscore. And was not Vanitekes the favorite? Was it not to be Vanitekes, whose picture graced every shop-window, that stared full-length from every paper? Was it not the wonderful Vanitekes who was to lead all the world?

And yet—who knows—the vanity of the unpreferred champion was betrayed by his bitter smile—the race was not yet run. But he had to see Marie. Come what would of it, he would see her. He swung back the shutters and for a moment balanced himself at the ledge. He was not certain of the distance to be dropped, but what matter?

Even as he landed sprawling, ere yet he picked himself up, he was praying that of whatever bones might be broken they would not be those of his legs. He would have need of them.

All the way Loues ran to Marousi, above twelve kilometres, over the uneven road. He knew that he should not be doing it—his country demanded and deserved better of him; but that inward torment, even as he reasoned thus, would not leave him.

Euripides, as if he had been expecting him, answered quickly to the knock on the door, but could not forbear a little grandmotherly scolding. "H-m—and so you are come. I had begun to hope that Gouskous had dissuaded you. Yes, I have had more than one conversation with him about you. And you must have run all the way. And since you would come, why did you not ride, this night above all others?"

"Ride? Search for a carriage this hour of the night and have it all over Athens tomorrow. Besides I could come quicker afoot. The horses of our cabmen are overworked these days."

"H-m-m—There's a strange mixture of

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wisdom and impulse for you! You're a lather of sweat. You did run all the way then?"

"I did. And would, had it been to Marathon itself."

"And been ready to turn about and run all the way back the day after to-morrow for the honor of Greece? Do you think you're doing well, Loues?"

"I think nothing, godfather—I care nothing. This I had to do or fret my soul away ere morning. May I sleep here to-night? Or will you argue till I fly to the hills and sleep there till dawn?"

Euripides then must have seen what he never saw before in the boy, for at once he ceased scolding, and laying a tender hand to his head, which was feverishly hot, patted him as if he were a child. "Yes, Loues, turn in now. But here, first this—" and made him drink a cup of warm goat's milk. "'Twill make you sleep," he said, and sat by his cot, kindly smiling till the lad fell to slumber.

IX

In the morning Loues was early awake. The feverish spirit was not yet wholly allayed, though the sleep had calmed him wonderfully. Waiting not for breakfast, he strolled forth. Toward Marie's house he went, but seeing no one awake he continued his way toward the hills.

Now hills and woods had ever an overpowering effect on Loues. He never beheld the uprising slopes of the one, nor gave himself to contemplation in the shades of the other, but at once whatever petty troubles beset fell from him like a cast garment. And so it was this morning. He lay on his back on a broad flat stone, minding not the moisture which everywhere dripped from the underbrush, and fell into soothing meditation. It was very quiet. Everything—even the heart which for days before had been throbbing painfully was now deliciously quiescent. And lying there he reviewed all the years, the years and years, the beautiful years of his boyhood.

It was almost as if he had fallen asleep; and it seemed as if from out a dream, as if from out his dream of the days back there when they were playmates in that village of Marousi, that she came and leaned over him. And, as though if it were no dream he would know who it must be, he refrained from opening his eyes. "Loues," he thought she whispered, "Loues," and, doubtless thinking he was asleep, bent down and touched her lips to his forehead.

He forced lips and eyes to remain closed, but he felt that the warming blood must have rushed to his amazed face, for—if it were no dream—he felt her shrinking away, and he felt his temples, cheeks and very ears and neck burn.

"Loues," she called again, more loudly, and he opened his eyes.

Perhaps three paces away she stood, leaning against a tree, and regarding him with an expression new to him; but calmly enough she went on: "From behind my curtain I saw you pass, and came after you, and found you here, and waited the longest time for you to awake. What brought you back, Loues?"

"To see you, Marie."

She neither smiled nor frowned; only knitting her brows, said: "And the race so near?"

"I know, but I could not help it. I had to come."

For a minute or two she remained silent, regarding him the meanwhile however with intentness. And then, "Have you had breakfast?"

"Not yet."

"No? That is good."

"Why?"

"Because I am going to confess and receive the sacrament. Will you come?"

He leaped to his feet.

"And receive the sacrament, too, Loues?"

"With you, Marie? That I will——"

She clapped her hands. Her face flushed, her eyes shone luminously. "It is true what Euripides maintained· 'Soldier or no, city or barracks—'" she ended suddenly.

But Loues, in a puzzle, had heard clearly. "What is it Euripides maintained? and why?"

"It is nothing."

"Nothing—then why——"

"Hush—I will tell you later—some time —" and would answer no more, but to herself breathed, "It is true—his is the clean soul, as Euripides said—" and turning to him—"Let us go."

And so to the little centuries-old church he went with her, and confessed after her, and received communion beside her.

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"And for what purpose do you think I offered my communion, Loues?" Mass was over, but they lingered in the church porch.

"To what, Marie?"

"To your success," she whispered.

"And I to your—but I will tell you later," he whispered.

She flushed vividly. "And now shall we go back and light a taper before the Blessed Virgin's shrine, also for your success?"

"For mine, yes—or for the success of a Greek—whoever he be."

"That is better and greater, for whoever it may be, so it be a Greek. But," she smiled timidly, "my prayers shall be for you, nevertheless. And now"—they had come to the road by now—"I must go home and you must go to your godfather's and have breakfast. And later I shall meet you and we will have a long talk over old days. And bring with you the new running clothes which Euripides has ready for you, those which you are to wear in the race."

And they met and went out into the sunlight and wandered far, and his heart was like a boy's again. And during all this time never a word of love, and yet every word making for love, and love alone. He was almost forgetting that ever a race was to be run next day; but the overthought of it was there and they both knew that soon he would have to leave for it; and began to talk of that.

The valley lay below them. No one was near.

"To-morrow you run, Loues?"

"To-morrow, Marie."

"You will run well, you think?"

"I think so, Marie."

"You will win, do you think?" She bent forward anxiously.

He did not answer.

"You doubt you will win, Loues?"

"Very much, Marie."

"Who then? Vanitekes?"

"Of all the Greeks I should name him. But when all the world is there; who could declare that this or that one will win—from among so many?"

"And you reflect on it calmly, you or no other Greek winning, Loues? Your coming into the Stadium to-morrow and—yet no Greek winning?"

He answered nothing to that until she spoke again. "What do you say, Loues? Doesn't that thought trouble you?"

"It troubles me so much, Marie, that I hesitate to say how much. I am going to try to win to-morrow—going to try so hard that I expect to win or—" He smiled so calmly that she had no suspicion.

"Go on, Loues. To win or—" No suspicion a moment ago; yet now as she looked on him she began to breathe painfully.

"No, no, it is a sin to say it, to think it even—after taking the sacrament, too."

"Never mind—to win or——?"

"Well, say—or drop on the road."

"Drop—insensible you mean, Loues?"

"Insensible? M-m——"

"You mean dead—drop dead, Loues?"

He said nothing.

"Loues!" she gasped.

For a long space they said nothing more, until again she spoke. "Loues, you've no token of me, have you?"

He drew out from his inner pocket a little leather envelope and showed her the faded rose-leaves and the blue-and-white rosette. "At least, Marie, I have been supposing they are from you."

She seemed pleased and took them from him and held them tenderly. "Let me keep them now, Loues—because you have carried them. And now, let me see the jersey which you will wear to-morrow."

Loues undid the little package. The beautiful suit of white silk, sleeveless jersey and trousers cut to fit above the knee, fell out on to the grass. Marie picked them up and held them up. "Are they not beautiful—the blue trimmings—Oh, oh—blue and white—our country's colors. And now, see, Loues—" She drew from her bosom a small silk Greek flag. "This I am going to sew on the breast of your jersey—So—" She spread it out to show him. "Will it not be beautiful? It *is* beautiful—our flag," and bending over, kissed it rapturously. The tears were in her eyes, and almost in Loues's. "And now, Loues, that flag for our country, but this—"she drew forth the knot of blue-and-white ribbon—"this for one who will pray that you will win. This we will place—where shall we place it?"

Loues reached over and took it from her and laid it on the jersey. "There, Marie—above the heart—" and that there would be no mistake, held a finger on the exact spot until, by a preliminary stitch, she fitted it exactly.

"And 'twill be a happy girl returning to

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Three paces away she stood leaning against a tree.—Page 211.

Marousi if on the breast of the first runner entering the Stadium she sees that knot of blue and white, and beside it the flag of Greece."

Loues said nothing, because his tongue choked him; but in his mind flamed a picture of a victorious runner entering the Stadium. Vanitekes? Never! His heart jumped painfully at the thought, and yet, shame rose in him—Vanitekes was also a Greek.

"They say, Loues—" having put the last stitches to the ribbon, she was bending low to bite off the end of the thread—"it is reported that the rich widow, Madam—m-m—what *is* her name?"

"Madam Herikler?"

"Y-yes. It is—well, it is said that she has published her desire to wed the winner of the Marathon race—if he be a Greek—that is bestow on him her wealth—and herself. Is it so?"

"So they say, Marie."

"And she is beautiful, they say."

"M-m——"

"You have seen her?"

Loues nodded gravely.

"H-m—she has been to the Stadium to see the runners practice?"

"Oh, yes—frequently."

"H-m—And she is rich, but—but—*is* she beautiful?"

"M-m—yes."

"Ah-h—" sighed Marie. "Could a man be blamed? Rich, beautiful—" and went off into a reverie.

It was all like a reverie to Loues, almost a dream; but it had to end. The afternoon was fading, and they must be returning.

"Marie, I may not see you again until

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after the race to-morrow—win or lose—and yet if I lose——"

"If you lose, come to Marousi. I shall be waiting. Good-by."

"And if I win—suppose it, Marie—if I win?"

"If you win, Loues, it will be enough. There will be plenty to crown you. You will have no further need of me if you win."

She smiled as she said it. Loues smiled, too, but bitterly, to think she could say it so easily.

"But won't you come, Marie, by way of my godfather's? Early in the morning he is to take me to Marathon, and you may not see him until after the race again."

"Oh, I shall see him—his seats for the Stadium are near to ours. Only father and I go together, of course. Your godfather obtained seats near ours of your friend Gouskous."

"Ah, Gouskous! You should see Gouskous, Marie, since he has come from the Navy. A huge fellow, but a great soul, too."

"I have met him, Loues."

"Where?"

"One day in the Stadium. Euripides and I—we two went to see the athletes practice. It's not your rich widows alone who take interest—— "

"And where was I?"

"You had not returned from your practice on the road."

"And you did not wait?"

"Oh, yes—and saw you, but you did not see me. Gouskous, now, he is one to waste a moment in chat with a friend—but you, Loues, no sooner in than off. No more than two or three circles around the track and away to the dressing-room."

"Ah-h—I did not know, and covered with dust, I wished to get clean once more."

"I did not mind the dust, Loues. A little dust does not blind us, Loues. But I see no sign of your godfather. And, oh, Loues——"

"Yes—" they were by then within the door of Euripides's shop— "Yes, Marie."

"Nothing. But don't the men look so handsome in their athletic clothes! One who never saw could not conceive that men could look so beautiful. We women are stiff and clumsy beside you."

"Ah-h—Did you mark Gouskous—the symmetry for so large a man."

"The symmetry—Ah, Loues, in that—" She did not finish the sentence.

Euripides had not yet returned, and the two were standing alone. Marie sighed. Loues stepped closer.

"This rose, Loues—" She held it up, fragrant, exquisite, as she herself—"I have been carrying it—and why? To give you for the dead leaves of that rose I took from you to-day. A rose, like—like—love—should be ever blooming—and yet even if it dies! No, I shall not pin it, but do you carry it so—" She bent over—her head was beneath his chin—he rested his lips on her hair. She looked up. Said nothing, but looked at him. She was calm enough apparently, but he shook as with fever. She smiled and—it came over him—the hundred times this sweet day when, sitting beside her, walking beside her, his hand touched hers and he wished to clasp it, when her head bent toward his and his heart ached because he must not draw her to him—and the rush of passion overcame him—he drew her close and kissed her.

She did not lift her head, made no protest, and he in shame for himself drew away. To think of it! Only that morning he had received the holy sacrament with her—and already he had forgotten. He a man and she a girl—a weak girl. "Oh, Marie," he whispered, and dropped his arms in despair.

The hand over his shoulder patted him gently. There were tears, too, in her eyes, "It is all right, dear."

"But you——"

"Me? There has never been any other and never will be now. And what matter, so that you are happy? And now, good-by, and—" no further word, but raising her head, she kissed him, and ran off.

Ran off, but at the door turned, and oh, the look she gave!

Quivering, Loues sat down on his godfather's bench.

And there his godfather found him.

"What is it, Loues?" The old man touched the damp forehead, lifted the hot head.

Loues arose and stretched his arms—as if he would embrace the world. "Oh-h—godfather!" His eyes were flaming—to Euripides they flamed like the sword of an archangel.

"Ah-h—" murmured the old man—

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He and the Frenchman vied with each other in practical joking, "To the health of our respective countries."—Page 216

"whatever brought it on—the purple light of youth is coloring the world for you now. Take care, Loues, take care."

"Oh, godfather—" he stretched his arms again and laughed with a ripple like a girl's—like Marie's— "To-morrow, godfather—" and suddenly stopped.

Euripides waited, the boy said no more, but sat down with his head hidden again.

The old man patted him. "That's right. Do not say it, but think it all you please. It is the unuttered impulse which drives farthest and fastest."

X

Of all the candidates who assembled at Marathon on the morning of the race Loues was the last to arrive; and escaped not without some gibes as well as hearty greetings from his compatriots.

"Ola, it is Loues! So you tore yourself away? Who is it, Loues?"

"And does she live so far from Athens, Loues, that you had to leave a night in advance to see her?"

"Oh, Loues, you should have heard Gouskous trying to explain your absence. His imagination is as large as his body almost; but like the power of his great body he exercises it sometimes to no purpose. The director was not to be deceived. 'It is of no avail, Gouskous,' said he, 'he has been moping for days, and he is off at last.' Indeed, but he will be rejoiced to hear that you have turned up at last; for despite his criticism he was grieved at your deception."

Only Vanitekes, lowering and preoccupied, had no word either of censure or affection. He pretended, indeed, after the first unwilling nod of recognition, that he saw Loues no more; and yet Loues felt often

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that his rival's glowering eyes were turned on him as if he would have liked well to know where it was he had spent the missing hours.

Loues had no mind to enlighten him, nor any other there. He took his light breakfast—he and Euripides had left Marousi before sunup—and after breakfast made his way to the shade of a tree, and there lay down. All thought he was asleep, but it was not to sleep he went. He was thinking of Marie. And lying there he felt but little concern about the race. Why should he—Marie's kiss still on his lips! When his mind did revert to the trial it gave him no worry. A new confidence was in him. No longer did he feel distrust that he was doomed to fail in the very trying. He might be beaten; indeed it was almost certain that he would be, among so many, the pick of all the world over, but at least they would know that he was in the race.

There were yet several hours before the start of the race, and most of the competitors were resting in houses near by. It was a hot, breathless morning, and some could not sleep, either because of the heat or from nervousness. Loues after an hour or two of sweetest musing fell lightly asleep. And this outdoor nap—it was like a page from his old life. After a time he slept profoundly. Indeed they had to wake him when it came time for the luncheon, which all partook of about two hours before the start of the race.

In this matter of luncheon there was much difference of opinion. Some were for eating most sparingly, raw eggs in light wine, with a husk of bread; others not quite so unsubstantially as that, but still a light repast. Loues was of the opinion of a man from Ireland, who had no divided mind in the matter. "Gentlemen," he announced—Christovopulous, a runner, translating it—"if from here to Athens is the same distance as from Athens to here, then 'tis a long road. And we'll be needing, I'm thinking, something more nourishing than fresh air in our stomachs before we see the Stadium again. Something good and substantial for me, and you can't cook it too soon to suit me, either."

A droll man the Irishman, a big man who declared that he should be throwing weights like his Greek friend Gouskous, with whom he had become a favorite—anything but long-distance running. "It's only self-respect that's keeping me in it. 'Tis nothing but torture I've endured since I first set my two feet in this ancient country."

He and a Frenchman vied with each other in practical joking, and it was comical to see how they made out to converse, each but half comprehending the language of the other.

"And who will drink with me to the health of our respective countries?" With a bottle of cognac under his arm the Frenchman until now had been vainly trying to induce some one to exchange toasts with his.

The Irishman at last said that he would take a sup with him—"For—" he turned to Christovopulous—"as your own poet says:

> "'Tis blood and spirits gives us all our strength,
> To these we add brave wine and food at length:
> What man, though hero he, and strong
> Without them lasts the whole day long?'

And so not to make a liar of old Homer, I'll have to take one with you, Frenchie."

Said the Frenchman—"I drink to your success—after me."

"And you—here's to the long shanks of you running across the line first—that is, of course, if old Ireland has crossed before you."

The Frenchman was not content with that, but must seek to find others to drink healths with him, but thereat he was not oversuccessful. Here and there was a good-natured or a weak one who did. It was not that many would not like to, but they were not there this day to give appetite full play.

During all the parleying after luncheon Loues was busy in his own way. From a peasant near by he borrowed needle and thread and a small square of cloth. With these he improvised a tiny pouch, inside of which he placed the already withered rose of Marie's, and hung the whole, like a scapula, about his neck.

At two o'clock the contestants were assembled across the road in four crowded rows. In nearly all was apparent an intense nervousness. Some betrayed their dread of the ordeal by gripping and ungripping their hands continuously; by lacing and relacing their shoes; by chewing on wisps of wood; others again rolling and unrolling their hats. One would be continu-

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ously spitting out, another patting the ground with one foot; others again could not stay in one place but were running back and forth behind the aligned rows.

In the Frenchman the excitement showed in characteristic form. "Soon we go," he said, "but before we go one more health, one more. With you? You?" And so on with everybody refusing until he came to the Irishman, who pushed him along, but was at length persuaded. "For the glory of the sport then, Frenchie, one more hooker. And may the devil paralyze your legs if you bother me again."

All chafed under the dallying of the clerk of the course and his assistant, who seemed to spend an unconscionably long time in checking off the names. One after the other he read them, and as he called each answered. And such a list! More than a hundred in all, and from such far-away countries! Italy, Hungary, Austria, England, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Australia, America.

And then the clerk of the course, turning to the starter, said, "All is ready," whereupon the starter, an officer of the Greek Army, gave out the conditions of the race, first in French, and then in Greek; and, having done that, paused, and baring his head, addressed his own countrymen anew:

"The Greeks had this run inserted in the Olympic list," he said, "to commemorate the historic feat of the messenger who carried the news of the great victory of Marathon to the anxious waiters at Athens.

"Which of us does not know it by heart? But it may be wise to rehearse it here. Know then that when the valiant Greeks had swept the field of Marathon their first thought was to get the news home. They sought a fleet courier, and found him in the person of a warrior who had fought all day against the invading Persians and who was even then panting from his exertions. This one was only too proud to be the chosen messenger—indeed who would not be?—and at the word he was off, only disencumbering himself of his heavier armor. His great run was made with but one brief stop for refreshment on the way. He reached the market-place of Athens in an incredibly short time, turned to the multitude, spoke the one word, 'Victory!' and dropped dead."

Here the officer's voice choked, and for a moment he could not go on, and there were tears in the eyes of many others also. And when he went on, "And so may it be with us of Greece to-day—victory or——"

"Death!" shouted several—Vanitekes among them. Loues did not shout, did not even whisper to Christovopulous who was beside him, but his heart at the call leaped so convulsively that he was forced to press a hand to his breast to check its movement.

"Loues, Loues—you are pale," whispered Christovopulous.

Loues smiled. The hand that had been pressed to his heart now caressed the knot of blue and white. The other hand was tucking inside his jersey the amulet with the roses.

"Twice blessed," whispered Loues, smiling—"but oh, Christovopulous, this waiting is the most trying, don't you think?"

(To be concluded.)

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FORTY MINUTES LATE

By F. Hopkinson Smith

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROSE O'NEILL WILSON

IT began to snow half an hour after the train started — a fine-grained, slanting, determined snow that forced its way between the bellows of the vestibules, and deposited itself in mounds of powdered salt all over the platforms and steps. Even the porter had caught some puffs on his depot coat with the red cape, and so had the conductor, from the way he thrashed his cap on the back of the seat in front of mine.

"Yes, gettin' worse," he said in answer to an inquiring lift of my eyebrows. "Everything will be balled up if this keeps on."

"Will we make the connection at Bondville?" I was to lecture fifty miles from Bondville Junction, and had but half an hour lee-way.

If the man with the punch heard, he made no answer. The least said the soonest mended in crises like this. If we arrived on time every passenger would grab his bag and bolt out without thanking him or the road, or the engineer who took the full blast of the storm on his chest and cheeks. If we missed the connection, any former hopeful word would only add another hot coal to everybody's anger.

I fell back on the porter:

"Yes, sir, she'll be layin' jes 'cross de platform. She knows we're comin'. Sometimes she waits ten minutes—sometimes she don't; more times I seen her pullin' out while we was pullin' in."

Not very reassuring this. Only one statement was of value—the position of the connecting train when we rolled into Bondville.

I formulated a plan: The porter would take one bag, I the other—we would both stand on the lower step of the Pullman, then make a dash. If she was pulling out as we pulled in, a goat-like spring on my part might succeed; the bags being hurled after me to speed the animal's motion.

One hour later we took up our position.

"Yer ain't the fust one they've left down here to git up the best way they could." —Page 222.

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She put them on with her own hands.—Page 222.

"Dat's good!—Dar she is jes' movin' out: thank ye, sar. I got de bag—dis way!"

There came a jolt, a Saturday-afternoon-slide across the ice-covered platform, an outstretched greasy hand held down from the step of the moving train, followed by the chug of a bag that missed my knees by a hand's breadth—and I was hauled on board.

The contrast between a warm, velvet-lined Pullman and a cane-seated car with both doors opened every ten minutes, was anything but agreeable; but no discomfort should count when a lecturer is trying to make his connection. That is what he is paid for and that he must do at all hazards and at any cost, even to chartering a special train, the price devouring his fee.

Once in my seat an account of stock was taken—two bags, an umbrella, overcoat, two gum shoes (one off, one on) manuscript of lecture in bag, eye-glasses in outside pocket of waistcoat. This over, I spread myself upon the cane seat and took in the situation. It was four o'clock (the lecture was at eight): Sheffield was two hours away; this would give time to change my dress and get something to eat. The committee, moreover, were to meet me at the depot with a carriage and drive me to where I was "to spend the night and dine"—so the chairman's letter read. The suppressed smile on the second conductor's face when he punched my ticket and read the name of "Sheffield," sent my hand into my pocket in search of this same letter. Yes—there was no mistake about it:—"Our carriage," it read, "will meet you," etc., etc.

The confirmation brought with it a certain thrill; not a carriage picked up out of the street, or a lumbering omnibus—a mere go-between from station to hotels—but "our carriage!" Nothing like these lecture associations, I thought—nothing like these committees, for making strangers comfortable. That was why it was often a

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"I have been boiling mad for ten minutes and am still at white heat."—Page 224.

real pleasure to appear before them. This one, would, no doubt, receive me in a big yellow and white Colonial club house built by the women of the town—(I know of a dozen just such structures) with dressing and lunch rooms, spacious lecture hall and janitor in gray edged with black.

This thought called up my own responsibility in the matter; I was glad I had caught the train; it was a bad night to bring people out and then disappoint them, even if most of them did come in their own carriages. Then again, I had kept my word; none of my fault, of course, if I hadn't—but I had! —that was a source of satisfaction. Now that I thought of it, I had, in all my twenty years of lecturing, only failed twice to reach the platform. In one instance a bridge was washed away, and in the other my special train (the price I paid for that train still keeps me hot against the Trusts)—ran into a snowdrift and stayed there until after midnight, instead of delivering me on time, as agreed. I had arrived late, of course, many times; gone without my supper often, and more than once had appeared without the proper habiliments—and I am particular about my dress coat and white waistcoat;—but only twice had the gas been turned off and the people turned out. Another time I had——

"Sheffield! Shef-fie-l-d! All out for Shef-f-i-e-l-d!" yelled the conductor.

The two bags once more, the conductor helping me on with my overcoat, down the snow-blocked steps and out into the night.

"Step lively!—more'n an hour late now."

I looked about me. I was the only pas-

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senger. Not a light of any kind—not a building of any kind, sort or description, except a box-car of a station set up on end, pitch dark inside and out, and shut tight. No carriage. No omnibus; nothing on runners; nothing on wheels. Only a dreary waste of white, roofed by a vast expanse of black.

"Is this Sheffield?" I gasped.

"Yes,—all there is here; the balance is two miles over the hills."

"The town?"

"Town?—no, the settlement; —ain't more's two dozen houses in it."

"They were to send a carriage and——"

"Yes—that's an old yarn—better foot it for short." Here he swung his lantern to the engineer craning his head from the cab of the locomotive, and sprang aboard. Then this fragment came whirling through the steam and smoke:—"There's a farmhouse somewhere's over the hill,—follow the fence and turn to——" the rest was lost in the roar of the on-speeding train.

I am no longer young. Furthermore, I hate to carry things—bags especially. One bag might be possible—a very small one; two bags, both big, are an insult.

I deposited the two outside the box-car, tried the doors, inserted my fingers under the sash of the one window, looked at the chimney with a half-formed Santa Claus idea of scaling the roof and sliding down to some possible fireplace below; examined the wind-swept snow for carriage tracks, peered into the gloom and, as a last resort, leaned up against the sheltered side of the box to think.

There was no question that if a vehicle of any kind had been sent to meet me it had long since departed; the trackless roadway showed that. It was equally evident that if one was coming, I had better meet it on the way than stay where I was and freeze to death. The fence was still visible—the near end—and there was a farmhouse somewhere—so the conductor had said, and he seemed to be an honest, truthful man. Whether to right or left of the invisible road, the noise of the train, and the howl of the wind had prevented my knowing—but *somewhere's*— That was a consolation.

The bags were the most serious obstacles. If I carried one in each hand the umbrella would have to be cached, for some future relief expedition to find in the spring. There *was* a way, of course, to carry bags—any number of bags. All that was needed was a leather strap with a buckle at each end; I had helped to hang half a dozen bags across the shoulders of as many porters meeting trains all over Europe. Of course, I didn't wear leather straps. Suspenders were my stronghold. They might!—No, it was too cold to get at them in that wind. And if I did they were of the springy, wabbly kind that would seesaw the load from my hips to my calves.

The only thing was to press on. Some one had blundered, of course.

"Half a league, half a league—into the jaws," etc.

"Theirs not to reason why——"

But my duty was plain; the audience were already assembling; the early ones in their seats by this time.

Then an inspiration surged through me. Why not slip the umbrella through the handle of one bag, as Pat carries his shillalah and bundle of duds, and grab the other in my free hand! "Our carriage" couldn't be far off. The exercise would keep my blood active and my feet from freezing, and as to the road, was there not the fence, its top rail making rabbit jumps above the drifts?

So I trudged on, stumbling into holes, flopping into treacherous ruts, halting in the steeper places to catch my breath, till I reached the top of the hill. There I halted—stopped short, in fact: the fence had given out! In its place was a treacherous line of bushes that faded into a delusive clump of trees. Beyond, and on both sides, stretched a great white silence—still as death.

Another council of war. I could retrace my steps, smash in the windows of the station and camp for the night, taking my chances of stopping some east-bound train as it whizzed past, with a match and my necktie—or I could stumble on, perhaps in a circle, and be found in the morning by the early milk.

On! On once more—maybe the clump of trees hid something—maybe——

Here a light flashed—a mere speck of a light—not to the right, where lay the clump of trees—but to my left; then a faint wave of warm color rose from a chimney and curled over a low roof buried in snow. Again the light flashed—this time through a window with four panes of glass—each one a beacon to a storm-tossed mariner!

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On once more—into a low hollow—up a steep slope—slipping, falling, shoving the hand-gripped bag ahead of me to help my footing, until I reached a snow-choked porch and a closed door.

Here I knocked.

For some seconds there was no sound; then came a heavy tread, and a man in overalls threw wide the door.

"Well, what do you want at this time of night?" (Time of night, and it but seven-thirty!)

"I'm the lecturer," I panted.

"Oh, come! Ain't they sent for ye? Here, I'll take 'em. Walk in and welcome. You look beat out. Well—well—wife and I was wonderin' why nothin' driv past for the six-ten. We knowed you was comin'. Then agin, the station master's sick, and I 'spose ye couldn't warm up none. And they ain't sent for ye? And they let ye tramp all— Well—well!"

I did not answer. I hadn't breath enough left for sustained conversation; moreover, there was a red-hot stove ahead of me, and a rocking-chair,—comforts I had never expected to see again—and there was a pine table—oh, a lovely pine table, with a most exquisite white oil-cloth cover, holding the most beautiful kerosene lamp with a piece of glorious red flannel floating in its amber fluid; and in the corner—a wife—a sweet-faced, angelic-looking young wife, with a baby in her arms too beautiful for words—must have been!

I dropped into the chair, spread my fingers to the stove and looked around—warmth—rest—peace—comfort—companionship—all in a minute!

"No, they didn't send anything," I wheezed when my breath came. "The conductor told me I should find the farmhouse over the hill—and——"

"Yes, that's so; it's back a piece, you must have missed it."

"Yes—I must have missed it," I continued in a dazed way.

"The folks at the farmhouse is goin' to hear ye speak, so they told me. Must be startin' now."

"Would you please let them know I am here, and——"

"Sure! Wait till I git on my boots! Hello!—that's him now."

Again the door swung wide. This time it let in a fur overcoat, coon-skin cap, two gray yarn mittens, a pair of raw-beefsteak cheeks and a voice like a fog-horn.

"Didn't send for ye? Wall, I'll be goldurned! And yer had to fut it? Well, don' that beat all. And yer ain't the fust one they've left down here to git up the best way they could. Last winter—Jan'ry, warn't it, Bill?" Bill nodded—"there come a woman from New York and they dumped her out jes' same as you. I happened to come along in time, as luck would have it—I was haulin' a load of timber on my bob-sled—and there warn't nothin' else, so I took her up to the village. She got in late, of course, but they was a-waitin' for her. I really wasn't goin' to hear you speak to-night—we git so much of that sort of thing since the old man who left the money to pay you fellers for talkin' died—been goin' on ten years now—but I'll take ye 'long with me, and glad to. But yer oughter have somethin' warmer'n what yer got on. Wind's kinder nippy down here, but it ain't nothin' to the way it bites up on the ridge."

This same thought had passed through my own mind. The unusual exertion had started every pore in my body; the red-hot stove had put on the finishing touches and I was in a Russian bath. To face that wind meant all sorts of calamities.

The Madonna-like wife with the cherub in her arms rose to her feet.

"Would you mind wearing my fur tippet?" she said in her soft voice; "'tain't much, but it 'ud keep out the cold from yer neck and maybe this shawl'd help some, if I tied it round your shoulders. Father got his death ridin' to the village when he was overhet."

She put them on with her own hands, bless her kind heart! her husband holding the baby; then she followed me out into the cold and helped draw the horse-blanket over my knees; the man in the coon-skin cap lugging the bags and the umbrella.

I looked at my watch. After eight o'clock, and two miles to drive!

"Oh, I'll git yer there," came a voice from inside the fur overcoat. "Darter wanted to go, but I said 'twarn't no night to go nowhars. Got to see a man who owes me some money or I'd stay home myself. Git up, Joe."

It was marvellous, the intelligence of this man. More than marvellous when my

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again blinded eyes—the red flannel in the lamp helped—began to take in the landscape. Fences were evidently of no use to him; clumps of trees didn't count. If he had a compass anywhere about his clothes, he never once consulted it. Drove right on—across trackless Siberian steppes; by the side of endless glaciers, and through primeval forests, his voice keeping up its volume of sound, as he laid bare for me the scandals of the village—particularly the fight going on between the two churches—one hard and one soft—this lecture course being one of the bones of contention.

I saved my voice and kept quiet. If a runner did not give out or "Joe" break a leg, we would reach the hall in time; half an hour late, perhaps—but in time; the man beside me had said so—and the man beside me knew.

With a turn of the fence—a new one had thrust its hands out of a drift—a big building—big in the white waste—loomed up. My companion flapped the reins the whole length of Joe's back.

"Git up! No, by gosh!—they ain't tired yet;—they're still a-waitin'. See them lights—that's the hall."

I gave a sigh of relief. The ambitious young man with one ear open for stellar voices, and the overburdened John Bunyan, and any number of other short-winded pedestrians, could no longer monopolize the upward and onward literature of our own or former times. I too had arrived.

Another jerk to the right—a trot up an incline, and we stopped at a steep flight of steps—a regular Jacob's-ladder flight—leading to a corridor dimly lighted by the flare of a single gas jet. Up this I stumbled, lugging the bags once more, my whole mind bent on reaching the platform at the earliest possible moment—a curious mental attitude, I am aware, for a man who had eaten nothing since noon, was still wet and shivering inside, and half frozen outside—nose, cheeks, and fingers—from a wind that cut like a circular saw.

As I landed the last bag on the top step—the fog-horn couldn't leave his horse—I became conscious of the movements of a short, rotund, shad-shaped gentleman in immaculate white waistcoat, stiff choker and wide expanse of shirt front. He was approaching me from the door of the lecture hall in which sat the audience; then a clammy hand was thrust out—and a thin voice trickled this sentence:

"You're considerable late, sir—our people have been in their——"

"I am *what!*" I cried, straightening up.

"I said you were forty minutes late, sir. We expect our lecturers to be on——"

That was the fulminate that exploded the bomb. Up to now I had held myself in hand. I was carrying, I knew, 194 pounds of steam, and I also knew that one shovel more of coal would send the entire boiler into space, but through it all I had kept my hand on the safety-valve. It might have been the white waistcoat or the way the curved white collar cupped his billiard-ball of a chin, or it might have been the slight frown about his eyebrows, or the patronizing smile that drifted over his freshly laundered face; or it might have been the deprecating gesture with which he consulted his watch: whatever it was, out went the boiler.

"LATE! Are you the man that's running this lecture course?"

"Well, sir, I have the management of it."

"You have, have you? Then permit me to tell you right here, my friend, that you ought to sublet the contract to a five-year-old boy. You let me get out in the cold—send no conveyance as you agreed——"

"We sent our wagon, sir, to the station," You could have gone in and warmed yourself, and if it had not arrived you could have telephoned—the station is always warm."

"You have the impudence to tell me that I don't know whether a station is closed or not, and that I can't see a wagon when it is hauled up alongside a depot?"

The clammy hands went up in protest: "If you will listen, sir, I will——"

"No, sir, I'll listen to nothing," and I forged ahead into a small room where five or six belated people were hanging up their coats and hats.

But the Immaculate still persisted:

"This is not where— Will you come into the dressing-room, sir, we have a nice warm room for the lecturers on the other side of the——"

"No—sir; I won't go another step, except on to that platform, and I'm not very anxious now to get there—not until I put something inside of me—" (here I unstrapped my bag) "to save me from an attack of pneumonia." (I had my flask

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out now and the cup filled to the brim). "When I think of how hard I worked to get here and how little you—" (and down it went at one gulp.

The expression of disgust that wrinkled the placid face of the Immaculate as the half-empty flask went back to its place, was pathetic—but I wouldn't have given him a drop to have saved his life.

I turned on him again:

"Do you think it would be possible to get a vehicle of any kind to take we where I am to sleep?"

"I think so, sir." His self-control was admirable.

"Well, will you please do it?"

"A sleigh has already been ordered, sir." This came through tightly closed lips.

"All right. Now down which aisle is the entrance to the platform?"

"This way, sir." The highest glacier on Mont Blanc couldn't have been colder or more impassive.

Just here a calming thought wedged itself into my brain-storm. These patient, long-suffering people were not to blame; many of them had come several miles through the storm to hear me speak and were entitled to the best that was in me. To vent upon them my spent steam because— No, that was impossible.

"Hold on, my friend," I said, "stop where you are, let me pull myself together. This isn't their fault—" We were passing behind the screen hiding the little stage.

But he didn't hold on; he marched straight ahead; so did I, past the pitcher of ice water and the two last winter's palms, where he motioned me to a chair.

His introduction was not long, nor was it discursive. There was nothing eulogistic of my various acquirements, occupations, talents; no remark about the optimistic trend of my literature, the affection in which my characters were held; nothing of this at all. Nor did I expect it. What interested me more was the man himself.

The steam of my wrath had blurred his outline and make-up before; now I got a closer, although a side, view of his person. He was a short man, much thicker at the middle than he was at either end—a defect all the more apparent by reason of a long-tailed, high-waisted, unbuttonable black coat which, while it covered his back and sides, would have left his front exposed, but for his snowy white waistcoat, which burst like a ball of cotton from its pod.

His only gesture was the putting together of his ten fingers, opening and touching them again to accentuate his sentences. What passed through my mind as I sat and watched him, was not the audience, nor what I was going to say to them, but the Christian-like self-control of this gentleman—a control which seemed to carry with it a studied reproof. Under its influence I unconsciously closed both furnace doors and opened my forced draft. Even then I should have reached for the safety-valve, but for an oily, martyr-like smile which flickered across his face, accompanied by a deprecating movement of his elbows, both indicating his patience under prolonged suffering, and his instant readiness to turn the other cheek if further smiting on my part was in store for him.

I strode to the edge of the platform:

"I know, good people," I exploded, "that you are not responsible for what has happened, but I want to tell you before I begin, that I have been boiling mad for ten minutes and am still at white heat, and that it is going to take me some time to get cool enough to be of the slightest service to you. You notice that I appear before you without a proper suit of clothes—a mark of respect which every lecturer should pay his audience. You are also aware that I am nearly an hour late. What I regret is, first, the cause of my frame of mind, second that you should have been kept waiting. Now, let me tell you exactly what I have gone through, and I do it simply because this is not the first time that this has happened to your lecturers, and it ought to be your last. It certainly will be the last for me."

Then followed the whole incident, including the Immaculate's protest about my being late, my explosion, etc., etc., even to the incident of my flask.

There was a dead silence—so dead and lifeless that I could not tell whether they were offended or not; but I made my bow, as usual, and began my discourse.

The lecture over, the Immaculate paid me my fee with punctilious courtesy, waiving the customary receipt; followed me to the cloak-room, helped me on with my coat, picked up one of the bags,—an auditor the other, and the two followed me down Jacob's ladder into the night. Outside stood

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"The hired girl said she didn't blame you a mite."—Page 226.

a sleigh shaped like the shell of Dr. Holmes's *Nautilus*, its body hardly large enough to hold a four-months-old baby. This was surrounded by half the audience, anxious, I afterward learned, for a closer view of the man who had "sassed" the Manager. Some of them expected it to continue.

I squeezed in beside the bags and was about to draw up the horse blanket, when a voice rang out:

"Mis' Plimsole's goin' in that sleigh, too. It was at Mrs. Plimsole's that I was to spend the night.

Then a faint voice answered back:

"No, I can just as well walk." She evidently knew the danger of sitting next to an overcharged boiler.

Mrs. Plimsole!—A woman—walk—on a night like this—I was out of the sleigh before she had ceased to speak.

"No, madam, you are going to do nothing of the kind; if anybody is to walk it will be me; I'm getting used to it."

She allowed me to tuck her in. It was too dark for me to see what she was like—she was so swathed and tied up. Being still mad—fires drawn but still dangerous, I concluded that my companion was sour, and skinny, with a parrot nose and one tooth gone. That I was to pass the night at her house did not improve the estimate; there would be mottoes on the walls—"What is home without a mother," and the like; tidies on the chairs, and a red-hot stove smelling of drying socks. There would also be a basin and pitcher the size of a cup and saucer, and a bed that sagged in the middle and was covered with a cotton quilt.

The *Nautilus* stopped at a gate, beyond which was a smaller Jacob's ladder leading to a white cottage. Was there nothing built on a level in Sheffield? I asked myself. The bags which had been hung on the shafts came first, then me, then the muffled head and cloak. Upward and onward again, through a door, past a pretty girl who stood with her hand on the knob in welcome, and into a hall. Here the girl helped unmummy her mother, and then turned up the hall-lamp.

Oh, such a dear, sweet gray-haired old lady! The kind of an old lady you would have wanted to stay—not a night with—but a year. An old lady with plump fresh cheeks and soft brown eyes and a smile that warmed you through and through. And

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such an all-embracing restful room with its open wood fire, andirons and polished fender—and the plants and books and easy-chairs! And the cheer of it all!

"Now you just sit there and get comfortable," she said, patting my shoulder—(the second time in one night that a woman's hand had been that of an angel). "Maggie'll get you some supper. We had it all ready, expecting you on the six-ten. Hungry, aren't you?"

Hungry! I could have gnawed a hole in a sofa to get at the straw stuffing.

She drew up a chair, waited till her daughter had left the room, and said with a twinkle in her eyes:

"Oh, I was glad you gave it to 'em the way you did, and when you sailed into that snivelling old Hard-shell deacon, there was a woman next to me who put her hands down under her petticoats and clapped them for joy. There isn't anybody running anything up here. They don't have to pay for this lecture course. It was given to them by a man who is dead. All they think they've got to do is to dress themselves up. They're all officers; there's a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary and an executive committee and a president and two vice presidents, and a lot more that I can't remember. Every one of them is leaving everything to somebody else to attend to. I know, because I take care of all the lecturers that come. Only last winter a lady lecturer arrived here on a load of wood; she didn't lose her temper and get mad like you did. Maybe you know her; she told us all about the Indians and her husband, the great general, who was surrounded and massacred by them."

"No, I can just as well walk."—Page 225.

"Know her, Madam, not only do I know and love her, but the whole country loves her. She is a saint, Madam, that the good Lord only allows to live in this world because if she was transferred there would be no standard left."

"Yes, but then you had considerable cause. The hired girl next door—she sat next to my daughter—said she didn't blame you a mite." (Somebody was on my side, anyhow.) "Now come in to supper."

The next morning I was up at dawn: I had to get up at dawn, because the omnibus only made one trip to the station, to catch the seven-o'clock train. I went by the eight ten, but a little thing like that never makes any difference in Sheffield.

When the omnibus arrived it came on runners. Closer examination from the window of the cosey room—the bedroom was even more delightful—revealed a square furniture van covered on the outside with white canvas, the door being in the middle, like a box-car. I bid the dear old lady and her daughter good-by, opened the hall door and stood on the top step. The driver, a stout, fat-faced fellow, looked up with an inquiring glance.

"Nice morning," I cried in my customary cheerful tone—the dear woman had wrought the change.

"You bet! Got over your mad?"

The explosion had evidently been heard all over the village.

"Yes," I laughed, as I crawled in beside two other passengers.

"You was considerable het up last night, so Si was tellin' me," remarked the passenger helping me with one bag.

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I bid the dear old lady and her daughter good-by.—Page 226.

I nodded. Who Si might be was not of special interest, and then again the subject had now lost its inflammatory feature.

The woman made no remark; she was evidently one of the secretaries.

"Well, by gum, if they had left me where they left you last night, and you a plumb stranger, I'd rared and pitched a little myself," continued the man. "When you come again——"

"Come again! Not by a ——"

"Oh, yes, you will. You did them Hardshells a lot of good! You just bet your bottom dollar they'll look out for the next one of you fellows that comes up here!"

The woman continued silent. She would have something to say about any return visit of mine, and she intended to say it out loud if the time ever came!

The station now loomed into sight. I sprang out and tried the knob. I knew all about that knob—every twist and turn of it.

"Locked again!" I shouted, "and I've got to wait here an hour in this——"

"Hold on—*hold on*—" shouted back the driver. "Don't break loose again. I got the key."

My mail a week later brought me a county paper containing this statement: "The last lecturer, owing to some error on the part of the committee, was not met at the train, and was considerably vexed. He said so to the audience and to the committee. Everybody was satisfied with his talk until they heard what they had to pay for it. He also said that he had left his dress suit in his trunk. If what we hear is true, he left his manners with it."

On reflection, the editor was right—*I had.*

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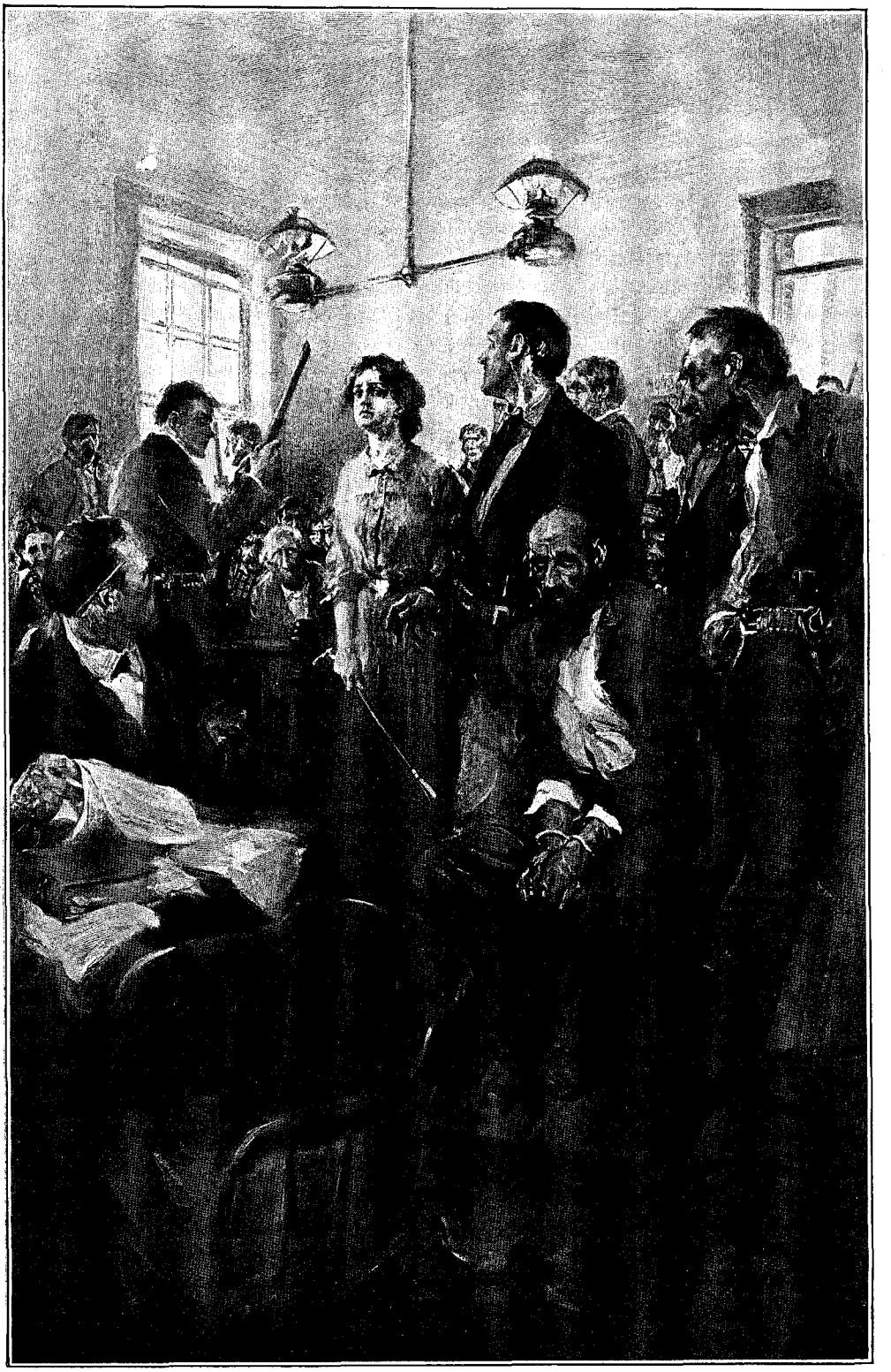

Drawn by F. C. Yohn.

"Why have you brought *me* here?"—Page 234.

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THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

BY JOHN FOX, JR.

Author of "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come"

ILLUSTRATION BY F. C. YOHN

XXV

THUS Fate did not wait until Election Day for the thing Hale most dreaded—a clash that would involve the guard in the Tolliver-Falin troubles over the hills. There had been simply a preliminary political gathering at the Gap the day before, but it had been a crucial day for the guard from a cloudy sunrise to a tragic sunset. Early that morning, Mockaby, the town-sergeant, had stepped into the street freshly shaven, with polished boots, and in his best clothes for the eyes of his sweetheart, who was to come up that day to the Gap from Lee. Before sunset he died with those boots on, while the sweetheart, unknowing, was bound on her happy way homeward, and Rufe Tolliver, who had shot Mockaby, was clattering through the Gap in flight for Lonesome Cove.

As far as anybody knew, there had been but one Tolliver and one Falin in town that day, though many had noticed the tall Western-looking stranger who, early in the afternoon, had ridden across the bridge over the North Fork, but he was quiet and well-behaved, he merged into the crowd and through the rest of the afternoon was in no way conspicuous, even when the one Tolliver and the one Falin got into a fight in front of the speaker's stand and the riot started which came near ending in a bloody battle. The Falin was clearly blameless and was let go at once. This angered the many friends of the Tolliver, and when he was arrested there was an attempt at rescue, and the Tolliver was dragged to the calaboose behind a slowly retiring line of policemen, who were jabbing the rescuers back with the muzzles of cocked Winchesters. It was just when it was all over, and the Tolliver was safely jailed, that Bad Rufe galloped up to the calaboose, shaking with rage, for he had just learned that the prisoner was a Tolliver. He saw how useless interference was, but he swung from his horse, threw the reins over its head after the Western fashion and strode up to Hale.

"You the captain of this guard?"

"Yes," said Hale; "and you?" Rufe shook his head with angry impatience and Hale, thinking he had some communication to make, ignored his refusal to answer.

"I hear that a fellow can't blow a whistle or holler, or shoot off his pistol in this town without gittin' arrested."

"That's true—why?" Rufe's black eyes gleamed vindictively.

"Nothin'," he said, and he turned to his horse.

Ten minutes later, as Mockaby was passing down the dummy track, a whistle was blown on the river bank, a high yell was raised, a pistol shot quickly followed and he started for the sound of them on a run. A few minutes later three more pistol shots rang out, and Hale rushed to the river bank to find Mockaby stretched out on the ground, dying, and a mountaineer lout pointing after a man on horseback, who was making at a swift gallop for the mouth of the Gap and the hills.

"He done it," said the lout in a frightened way; "but I don't know who he was."

Within half an hour ten horsemen were clattering after the murderer, headed by Hale, Logan, and the Infant of the Guard. Where the road forked, a woman with a child in her arms said she had seen a tall, black-eyed man with a black moustache gallop up the right fork. She no more knew who he was than any of the pursuers. Three miles up that fork they came upon a red-headed man leading his horse from a mountaineer's yard.

"He went up the mountain," the red-haired man said, pointing to the trail of the

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Lonesome Pine. "He's gone over the line. Whut's he done—killed somebody?"

"Yes," said Hale shortly, starting up his horse.

"I wish I'd a-knowed you was atter him. I'm sheriff over thar."

Now they were without warrant or requisition, and Hale, pulling in, said sharply:

"We want that fellow. He killed a man at the Gap. If we catch him over the line, we want you to hold him for us. Come along!" The red-headed sheriff sprang on his horse and grinned eagerly:

"I'm your man."

"Who was that fellow?" asked Hale as they galloped. The sheriff denied knowledge with a shake of his head.

"What's your name?" The sheriff looked sharply at him for the effect of his answer.

"Jim Falin." And Hale looked sharply back at him. He was one of the Falins who long, long ago had gone to the Gap for young Dave Tolliver and now the Falin grinned at Hale.

"I know you—all right." No wonder the Falin chuckled at this Heaven-born chance to get a Tolliver into trouble.

At the Lonesome Pine the traces of the fugitive's horse swerved along the mountain top—the shoe of the right forefoot being broken in half. That swerve was a blind and the sheriff knew it, but he knew where Rufe Tolliver would go and that there would be plenty of time to get him. Moreover, he had a purpose of his own and a secret fear that it might be thwarted, so, without a word he followed the trail till darkness hid it and they had to wait until the moon rose. Then as they started again, the sheriff said:

"Wait a minute," and plunged down the mountain side on foot. A few minutes later he hallooed for Hale, and down there showed him the tracks doubling backward along a foot-path.

"Regular rabbit, ain't he?" chuckled the sheriff, and back they went to the trail again on which two hundred yards below the Pine they saw the tracks pointing again to Lonesome Cove.

On down the trail they went, and at the top of the spur that overlooked Lonesome Cove, the Falin sheriff pulled in suddenly and got off his horse. There, the tracks swerved again into the bushes.

"He's goin' to wait till daylight, fer fear somebody's follered him. He'll come in back o' Devil Judd's."

"How do you know he's going to Devil Judd's?" asked Hale.

"Whar else would he go?" asked the Falin with a sweep of his arm toward the moonlit wilderness. "Thar ain't but one house that way fer ten miles—and nobody lives thar."

"How do you know that he's going to any house?" asked Hale impatiently. "He may be getting out of the mountains."

"D'you ever know a feller to leave these mountains jus' because he'd killed a man? How'd you foller him at night? How'd you ever ketch him with his start? What'd he turn that way fer, if he wasn't goin' to Judd's—why d'n't he keep on down the river? If he's gone, he's gone. If he ain't, he'll be at Devil Judd's at daybreak if he ain't thar now."

"What do you want to do?"

"Go on down with the hosses, hide 'em in the bushes an' wait."

"Maybe he's already heard us coming down the mountain."

"That's the only thing I'm afeerd of," said the Falin calmly. "But whut I'm tellin' you's our only chance."

"How do you know he won't hear us going down? Why not leave the horses?"

"We might need the hosses, and hit's mud and sand all the way—you ought to know that."

Hale did know that; so on they went quietly and hid their horses aside from the road near the place where Hale had fished when he first went to Lonesome Cove. There the Falin disappeared on foot.

"Do you trust him?" asked Hale, turning to Budd, and Budd laughed.

"I reckon you can trust a Falin against a friend of a Tolliver, or t'other way round—any time."

Within half an hour the Falin came back with the news that there were no signs that the fugitive had yet come in, and there they waited.

"No use surrounding the house now," said the Falin, "he might see one of us first when he comes in an' git away. We'll do that atter daylight."

And at daylight they saw the fugitive ride out the woods at the back of the house and boldly around to the front of the house,

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where he left his horse in the yard and disappeared.

"Now send three men to ketch him if he runs out the back way—quick!" said the Falin. "Hit'll take 'em twenty minutes to git thar through the woods. Soon's they git thar let one of 'em shoot his pistol off an' that'll be the signal fer us."

The three men started swiftly, but the pistol shot came before they had gone a hundred yards, for one of the three—a new man and unaccustomed to the use of firearms, stumbled over a root while he was seeing that his pistol was in order and had let it go off accidentally.

"No time to waste now," the Falin called sharply. "Git on yo' hosses and git!" Then the rush was made and when they gave up the chase at noon that day, the sheriff looked Hale squarely in the eye when Hale sharply asked him a question:

"Why didn't you tell me who that man was?"

"Because I was afeerd you wouldn't go to Devil Judd's atter him. I know better now," and he shook his head, for he did not understand. And so Hale at the head of the disappointed guard went back to the Gap, and when, next day, they laid Mockaby away in the thinly populated little graveyard that rested in the hollow of the river's arm, the spirit of law and order in the heart of every guard gave way to the spirit of revenge, and the grass would grow under the feet of none until Rufe Tolliver was caught and the death-debt of the law was paid with death.

That purpose was no less firm in the heart of Hale, and he turned away from the grave, sick with the trick that fate had lost no time in playing him; for he was a Falin now in the eyes of both factions and an enemy—even to June.

The weeks dragged slowly along, and June sank slowly toward the depths with every fresh realization of the trap of circumstance into which she had fallen. She had dim memories of just such a state of affairs when she was a child, for the feud was on now and the three things that governed the life of the cabin in Lonesome Cove were hate, caution, and fear.

Bub and her father worked in the fields with their Winchesters close at hand, and June was never easy if they were outside the house. If somebody shouted "hello"—that universal hail of friend or enemy in the mountains—from the gate after dark, one or the other would go out the back door and answer from the shelter of the corner of the house. Neither sat by the light of the fire where he could be seen through the window nor carried a candle from one room to the other. And when either rode down the river, June must ride behind him to prevent ambush from the bushes, for no mountaineer, even to kill his worst enemy, will risk harming a woman. Sometimes Loretta would come and spend the day, and she seemed little less distressed than June. Dave was constantly in and out, and several times June had seen the Red Fox hanging around. Always the talk was of the feud. The killing of this Tolliver and of that long ago was rehearsed over and over; all the wrongs the family had suffered at the hands of the Falins were retold, and in spite of herself June felt the old hatred of her childhood reawakening against them so fiercely that she was startled: and she knew that if she were a man she would be as ready now to take up a Winchester against the Falins as though she had known no other life.

Loretta got no comfort from her in her tentative efforts to talk of Buck Falin, and once, indeed, June gave her a scathing rebuke. With every day her feeling for her father and Bub was knit a little more closely, and toward Dave grew a little more kindly. She had her moods even against Hale, but they always ended in a storm of helpless tears. Her father said little of Hale, but that little was enough. Young Dave was openly exultant when he heard of the favoritism shown a Falin by the guard at the Gap, the effort Hale had made to catch Rufe Tolliver and his well-known purpose yet to capture him; for the guard maintained a fund for the arrest and prosecution of criminals, and the reward it offered for Rufe, dead or alive, was known by everybody on both sides of the State line. For nearly a week no word was heard of the fugitive, and then one night, after supper, while June was sitting at the fire, the back door was opened, Rufe slid like a snake within, and when June sprang to her feet with a sharp cry of terror, he gave his brutal laugh:

"Don't take much to skeer you—does

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it?" Shuddering she felt his evil eyes sweep her from head to foot, for the beast within was always unleashed and ever ready to spring, and she dropped back into her seat, speechless. Young Dave, entering from the kitchen, saw Rufe's look and the hostile lightning of his own eyes flashed at his foster-uncle, who knew straightway that he must not for his own safety strain the boy's jealousy too far.

"You oughtn't to 'a' done it, Rufe," said old Judd a little later, and he shook his head. Again Rufe laughed:

"No—" he said with a quick pacificatory look to young Dave, "not to *him!*" The swift gritting of Dave's teeth showed that he knew what was meant, and without warning the instinct of a protecting tigress leaped within June. She had seen and had been grateful for the look Dave gave the outlaw, but without a word she rose now and went to her own room. While she sat at her window her step-mother came out the back door and left it open for a moment. Through it June could hear the talk:

"No," said her father, "she ain't goin' to marry him." Dave grunted and Rufe's voice came again:

"Ain't no danger, I reckon, of her tellin' on me?"

"No," said her father gruffly, and the door banged.

No, thought June, she wouldn't, even without her father's trust, though she loathed the man, and he was the only thing on earth of which she was afraid—that was the miracle of it and June wondered. She was a Tolliver and the clan loyalty of a century forbade—that was all. As she rose she saw a figure skulking past the edge of the woods. She called Bub in and told him about it, and Rufe stayed at the cabin all night, but June did not see him next morning and she kept out of his way whenever he came again. A few nights later the Red Fox slouched up to the cabin with some herbs for the step-mother. Old Judd eyed him askance.

"Lookin' fer that reward, Red?" The old man had no time for the meek reply that was on his lips, for the old woman spoke up sharply:

"You let Red alone, Judd—I tol' him to come." And the Red Fox stayed to supper, and when Rufe left the cabin that night a bent figure with a big rifle and in moccasins sneaked after him.

The next night there was a tap on Hale's window just at his bedside, and when he looked out he saw the Red Fox's big rifle, telescope, moccasins and all in the moonlight. The Red Fox had discovered the whereabouts of Rufe Tolliver, and that very night he guided Hale and six of the guard to the edge of a little clearing where the Red Fox pointed to a one-roomed cabin quiet in the moonlight. Hale had his requisition now.

"Ain't no trouble ketchin' Rufe, if you bait him with a woman," he snarled. "There mought be several Tollivers in thar. Wait till daybreak and git the drap on him, when he comes out." And then he disappeared.

Surrounding the cabin Hale waited, and on top of the mountain, above Lonesome Cove, the Red Fox sat waiting and watching through his big telescope. Through it he saw Bad Rufe step outside the door at daybreak and stretch his arms with a yawn, and he saw three men spring with levelled Winchesters from behind a clump of bushes. The woman shot from the door behind Rufe with a pistol in each hand, but Rufe kept his hands in the air and turned his head to the woman who lowered the half-raised weapons slowly. When he saw the cavalcade start for the county seat with Rufe manacled in the midst of them he dropped swiftly down into Lonesome Cove to tell Judd that Rufe was a prisoner and to retake him on the way to jail. And, as the Red Fox well knew would happen, old Judd and young Dave and two other Tollivers who were at the cabin galloped into the county seat to find Rufe in jail, and that jail guarded by seven grim young men armed with Winchesters and shot-guns.

Hale faced the old man quietly—eye to eye.

"It's no use, Judd," he said, "you'd better let the law take its course." The old man was scornful.

"Thar's never been a Tolliver convicted of killin' nobody, much less hung—an' thar ain't goin' to be."

"I'm glad you warned me," said Hale, still quietly, "though it wasn't necessary. But if he's convicted, he'll hang."

The giant's face worked in convulsive helplessness and he turned away.

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"You hold the cyards now, but my deal is comin'."

"All right, Judd—you're getting a square one from me."

Back rode the Tollivers and Devil Judd never opened his lips again until he was at home in Lonesome Cove. June was sitting on the porch when he walked heavy-headed through the gate.

"They've ketched Rufe," he said, and after a moment he added gruffly:

"Thar's goin' to be sure enough trouble now. The Falins'll think all them police fellers air on their side now. This ain't no place fer you—you must git away."

June shook her head and her eyes turned to the flowers at the edge of the garden:

"I'm not goin' away Dad," she said.

XXVI

BACK to the passing of Boone and the landing of Columbus no man, in that region, had ever been hanged. And as old Judd said, no Tolliver had ever been sentenced and no jury of mountain men, he well knew, could be found who would convict a Tolliver, for there were no twelve men in the mountains who would dare. And so the Tollivers decided to await the outcome of the trial and rest easy. But they did not count on the mettle and intelligence of the grim young "furriners" who were a flying wedge of civilization at the Gap. Straightway, they gave up the practice of law and banking and trading and store-keeping and cut port-holes in the brick walls of the Court House and guarded town and jail night and day. They brought their own fearless judge, their own fearless jury and their own fearless guard. Such an abstract regard for law and order the mountaineer finds a hard thing to understand. It looked as though the motive of the guard was vindictive and personal, and old Judd was almost stifled by the volcanic rage that daily grew within him as the toils daily tightened about Rufe Tolliver.

Every happening the old man learned through the Red Fox, who with his huge pistols was one of the men who escorted Rufe to and fro from Court House to jail—a volunteer, Hale supposed, because he hated Rufe and, as the Tollivers supposed, so that he could keep them advised of everything that went on, which he did with secrecy and his own peculiar faith. And steadily and to the growing uneasiness of the Tollivers, the law went its way. Rufe had proven that he was at the Gap all day and had taken no part in the trouble. He produced a witness—the mountain lout whom Hale remembered—who admitted that he had blown the whistle, given the yell, and fired the pistol shot. When asked his reason, the witness, who was stupid, had none ready, looked helplessly at Rufe and finally mumbled—"fer fun." But it was plain from the questions that Rufe had put to Hale only a few minutes before the shooting and from the hesitation of the witness that Rufe had used him for a tool. So the testimony of the latter that Mockaby without even summoning Rufe to surrender had fired first, carried no conviction. And yet Rufe had no trouble making it almost sure that he had never seen the dead man before—so what was his motive? It was then that a word reached the ear of the prosecuting attorney—the only one that could establish a motive and make the crime a hanging offence, and Court was adjourned for a day, while he sent for the witness who could speak that word. That afternoon one of the Falins, who had grown bolder, and in twos and threes were always at the trial, shot at a Tolliver on the edge of town and there was an immediate turmoil between the factions that the Red Fox had been waiting for and that suited his dark purposes well.

That very night, with his big rifle, he slipped through the woods to a turn of the road, over which old Dave Tolliver was to pass next morning, and built a "blind" behind some rocks and lay there smoking peacefully and dreaming his Swedenborgian dreams. And when a wagon came round the turn, driven by a boy, and with the gaunt frame of old Dave Tolliver lying on straw in the bed of it, his big rifle thundered and the frightened horses dashed on with the Red Fox's last enemy lifeless. Coolly he slipped back to the woods, threw the shell from his gun, tirelessly his moccasins bore him by short cuts through the hills, and at noon, benevolent and smiling, he was on guard again.

The little Court Room was crowded for the afternoon session. Inside the railing sat Rufe Tolliver, white and defiant—

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manacled. Leaning on the railing to one side was the Red Fox with his big pistols, his good profile calm, dreamy, kind—to the other similarly armed was Hale. At each of the gaping port-holes and on each side of the door stood a guard with a Winchester, and around the railing outside were several more. In spite of window and port-hole the air was close and heavy with the smell of tobacco and the sweat of men. Here and there in the crowd was a red Falin, but not a Tolliver was in sight, and Rufe Tolliver sat alone. The clerk called the Court to order after the fashion since the days before Edward the Confessor —except that he asked God to save a commonwealth instead of a king—and the prosecuting attorney rose:

"Next witness, may it please your Honor"; and as the clerk got to his feet with a slip of paper in his hand and bawled out a name, Hale wheeled with a thumping heart. The crowd vibrated, turned heads, gave way, and through the human aisle walked June Tolliver with the sheriff following meekly behind. At the railing-gate she stopped, head uplifted, face pale and indignant, and her eyes swept past Hale as if he were no more than a wooden image, and were fixed with proud inquiry on the Judge's face. She was bareheaded, her bronze hair was drawn low over her white brows, her gown was of purple homespun, and her right hand was clenched tight about the chased silver handle of a riding whip, and in eyes, mouth, and in every line of her tense figure was the mute question: "Why have you brought *me* here?"

"Here, please," said the Judge gently, as though he were about to answer that question, and as she passed Hale she seemed to swerve her skirts aside that they might not touch him.

"Swear her."

June lifted her right hand, put her lips to the soiled, old, black Bible and faced the jury and Hale and bad Rufe Tolliver whose black eyes never left her face.

"What is your name?" asked a deep voice that struck her ears as familiar, and before she answered she swiftly recalled that she had heard that voice speaking when she entered the door.

"June Tolliver."

"Your age?"

"Eighteen."

"You live——"

"In Lonesome Cove."

"You are the daughter of——"

"Judd Tolliver."

"Do you know the prisoner?"

"He is my foster-uncle."

"Were you at home on the night of August the tenth?"

"I was."

"Have you ever heard the prisoner express any enmity against this volunteer Police Guard?" He waved his hand toward the men at the port-holes and about the railing—unconsciously leaving his hand directly pointed at Hale. June hesitated and Rufe leaned one elbow on the table, and the light in his eyes beat with fierce intensity into the girl's eyes into which came a curious frightened look that Hale remembered—the same look she had shown long ago when Rufe's name was mentioned in the old miller's cabin, and when going up the river road she had put her childish trust in him to see that her bad uncle bothered her no more. Hale had never forgot that, and if it had not been absurd he would have stopped the prisoner from staring at her now. An anxious look had come into Rufe's eyes—would she lie for him?

"Never" said June. Ah, she would—she was a Tolliver and Rufe took a breath of deep content.

"You never heard him express any enmity toward the Police Guard—before that night?"

"I have answered that question," said June with dignity and Rufe's lawyer was on his feet.

"Your Honor, I object," he said indignantly.

"I apologize," said the deep voice—"sincerely," and he bowed to June. Then very quietly:

"What was the last thing you heard the prisoner say that afternoon when he left your father's house?"

It had come—how well she remembered just what he had said and how that night, even when she was asleep, Rufe's words had clanged like a bell in her brain—what her awakening terror was when she knew that the deed was done and the stifling fear that the victim might be Hale. Swiftly her mind worked—somebody had blabbed, her step-mother, perhaps, and what Rufe had said had reached a Falin ear and come to

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the relentless man in front of her. She remembered, too, now, what the deep voice was saying as she came into the door:

"There must be deliberation, a malicious purpose proven to make the prisoner's crime a capital offence—I admit that, of course, your Honor. Very well, we propose to prove that now," and then she had heard her name called. The proof that was to send Rufe Tolliver to the scaffold was to come from her—that was why she was there. Her lips opened and Rufe's eyes, like a snake's, caught her own again and held them.

"He said he was going over to the Gap——"

There was a commotion at the door, again the crowd parted, and in towered giant Judd Tolliver pushing people aside as though they were straws, his bushy hair wild and his great frame shaking from head to foot with rage.

"You went to my house," he rumbled hoarsely—glaring at Hale—"an' took my gal thar when I wasn't at home—you——"

"Order in the Court," said the Judge sternly, but already at a signal from Hale several guards were pushing through the crowd and old Judd saw them coming and saw the Falins about him and the Winchesters at the port-holes, and he stopped with a hard gulp and stood looking at June.

"Repeat his exact words," said the deep voice again as calmly as though nothing had happened.

"He said, 'I'm goin' over to the Gap—' " and still Rufe's black eyes held her with mesmeric power—would she lie for him—would she lie for him?

It was a terrible struggle for June. Her father was there, her uncle Dave was dead, her foster-uncle's life hung on her next words and she was a Tolliver. Yet she had given her oath, she had kissed the sacred Book in which she believed from cover to cover with her whole heart, and she could feel upon her the blue eyes of a man for whom a lie was impossible and to whom she had never stained her white soul with a word of untruth.

"Yes," encouraged the deep voice kindly.

Not a soul in the room knew where the struggle lay—not even the girl—for it lay between the black eyes of Rufe Tolliver and the blue eyes of John Hale.

"Yes," repeated the deep voice again. Again, with her eyes on Rufe, she repeated:

"'I'm goin' over to the Gap—'" her face turned deadly white, she shivered, her dark eyes swerved suddenly full on Hale and she said slowly and distinctly, yet hardly above a whisper:

"'*To kill me a policeman.*'"

"That will do," said the deep voice gently, and Hale started toward her—she looked so deadly sick and she trembled so when she tried to rise; but she saw him, her mouth steadied, she rose, and without looking at him, passed by his outstretched hand and walked slowly out of the Court Room.

XXVII

THE miracle had happened. The Tollivers, following the Red Fox's advice to make no attempt at rescue just then, had waited, expecting the old immunity from the law and getting instead the swift sentence that Rufe Tolliver should be hanged by the neck until he was dead. Astounding and convincing though the news was, no mountaineer believed he would ever hang, and Rufe himself faced the sentence defiant. He laughed when he was led back to his cell:

"I'll never hang," he said scornfully. They were the first words that came from his lips, and the first words that came from old Judd's when the news reached him in Lonesome Cove, and that night old Judd gathered his clan for the rescue—to learn next morning that during the night Rufe had been spirited away to the capital for safe-keeping until the fatal day. And so there was quiet for a while—old Judd making ready for the day when Rufe should be brought back, and trying to find out who it was that had slain his brother Dave. The Falins denied the deed, but old Judd never questioned that one of them was the murderer, and he came out openly now and made no secret of the fact that he meant to have revenge. And so the two factions went armed, watchful and wary—especially the Falins, who were lying low and waiting to fulfil a deadly purpose of their own. They well knew that old Judd would not open hostilities on them until Rufe Tolliver was dead or at liberty. They knew that the old man

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meant to try to rescue Rufe when he was brought back to jail or taken from it to the scaffold, and when either day came they themselves would take a hand, thus giving the Tollivers at one and the same time two sets of foes. And so through the golden September days the two clans waited, and June Tolliver went with dull determination back to her old life, for Uncle Billy's sister had left the house in fear and she could get no help—milking cows at cold dawns, helping in the kitchen, spinning flax and wool, and weaving them into rough garments for her father and step-mother and Bub, and in time she thought grimly—for herself: for not another cent for her maintenance could now come from John Hale, even though he claimed it was hers—even though it was in truth her own. Never, but once, had Hale's name been mentioned in the cabin—never, but once, had her father referred to the testimony that she had given against Rufe Tolliver, for the old man put upon Hale the fact that the sheriff had sneaked into his house when he was away and had taken June to Court, and that was the crowning touch of bitterness in his growing hatred for the captain of the guard of whom he had once been so fond.

"Course you had to tell the truth, baby, when they got you there," he said kindly; "but kidnappin' you that-a-way—". He shook his great bushy head from side to side and dropped it into his hands.

"I reckon that damn Hale was the man who found out that you heard Rufe say that. I'd like to know how—I'd like to git my hands on the feller as told him."

June opened her lips in simple justice to clear Hale of that charge, but she saw such a terrified appeal in her step-mother's face that she kept her peace, let Hale suffer for that, too, and walked out into her garden. Never once had her piano been opened, her books had lain unread, and from her lips during those days came no song. When she was not at work, she was brooding in her room, or she would walk down to Uncle Billy's and sit at the mill with him while the old man would talk in tender helplessness, or under the honeysuckle vines with old Hon, whose brusque kindness was of as little avail. And then still silent she would get wearily up and as quietly go away while the two old friends worried to the heart followed her sadly with their eyes. At other times she was brooding in her room or sitting in her garden where she was now, and where she found most comfort—the garden that Hale had planted for her—where purple asters leaned against lilac shrubs that would flower for the first time the coming spring; where a late rose bloomed, and marigolds drooped, and great sunflowers nodded and giant castor-plants stretched out their hands of Christ. And while June thus waited the passing of the days, many things became clear to her: for the grim finger of reality had torn the veil from her eyes and let her see herself but little changed at the depths by contact with John Hale's world as she now saw him, but little changed by contact with hers. Slowly she came to see, too, that it was his presence in the Court Room that made her tell the truth, reckless of the consequences, and she came to realize that she was not leaving the mountains because she would go to no place where she could not know of any danger that, in the present crisis, might threaten John Hale.

And Hale saw only that in the Court Room she had drawn her skirts aside, that she had looked at him once and then had brushed past his helping hand. It put him in torment to think of what her life must be now, and of how she must be suffering. He knew that she would not leave her father in the crisis that was at hand and after it was all over—what then? His hands would still be tied and he would be even more helpless than he had ever dreamed possible. To be sure, an old land deal had come to life, just after the discovery of the worthlessness of the mine in Lonesome Cove and was holding out another hope. But if that, too, should fail—or if it should succeed—what then? Old Judd had sent back, with a curt refusal, the last "allowance" he forwarded to June and he knew the old man was himself in straits. So June must stay in the mountains and what would become of her? She had gone back to her mountain garb—would she lapse into her old life and ever again be content? Yes, she would lapse but never enough to keep her from being unhappy all her life, and at that thought he groaned. Thus far he was responsible and the paramount duty with

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him had been that she should have the means to follow the career she had planned for herself outside of those hills. And now if he had the means, he was helpless. There was nothing for him to do now but to see that the law had its way with Rufe Tolliver and meanwhile he let the reawakened land deal go hang and set himself the task of finding out who it was that had ambushed old Dave Tolliver. So even when he was thinking of June his brain was busy on that mystery, and one night as he sat in his porch a suspicion flashed that made him grip his chair with both hands and rise to pace the porch. Old Dave had been shot at dawn, and the night before the Red Fox had been absent from the guard and had not turned up until nearly noon next day. He had told Hale that he was going home. Two days later, Hale heard by accident that the old man had been seen near the place of the ambush about sunset of the day before the tragedy, which was on his way home, and he now learned straightway for himself that the Red Fox had not been home for a month—which was only one of his ways of mistreating the patient little old woman in black.

A little later, the Red Fox gave it out that he was trying to ferret out the murderer himself, and several times he was seen near the place of ambush, looking, as he said, for evidence. But this did not halt Hale's suspicions, for he recalled that the night he had spent with the Red Fox, long ago, the old man had burst out against old Dave and had quickly covered up his indiscretion with a pious characterization of himself as a man that kept peace with both factions. And then why had he been so suspicious and fearful when Hale told him that night that he had seen him talking with a Falin in town the Court day before, and had he disclosed the whereabouts of Rufe Tolliver and guided the guard to his hiding-place simply for the reward? He had not yet come to claim it, and his indifference to money was notorious through the hills. Apparently there was some general enmity in the old man toward the whole Tolliver clan, and maybe he had used the reward to fool Hale as to his real motive. And then Hale quietly learned that long ago the Tollivers bitterly opposed the Red Fox's marriage to a Tolliver—that Rufe when a boy was always teasing the Red Fox and had once made him dance in his moccasins to the tune of bullets spitting about his feet, and that the Red Fox had been heard to say that old Dave had cheated his wife out of her just inheritance of wild land; but all that was long, long ago and apparently had been mutually forgiven and forgotten. But it was enough for Hale, and one night he mounted his horse, and at dawn he was at the place of ambush with his horse hidden in the bushes. The rocks for the ambush were waist high and the twigs that had been thrust in the crevices between them were withered. And there, on the hypothesis that the Red Fox was the assassin, Hale tried to put himself, after the deed, into the Red Fox's shoes. The old man had turned up on guard before noon—then he must have gone somewhere first or have killed considerable time in the woods. He would not have crossed the road, for there were two houses on the other side; there would have been no object in going on over the mountain unless he meant to escape, and if he had gone over there for another reason he would have hardly had time to get to the Court House before noon: nor would he have gone back along the road on that side, for on that side, too, was a cabin not far away. So Hale turned and walked straight away from the road where the walking was easiest—down a ravine, and pushing this way and that through the bushes where the way looked easiest. Half a mile down the ravine he came to a little brook, and there in the black earth was the faint print of a man's left foot and in the hard crust across was the deeper print of his right, where his weight in leaping had come down hard. But the prints were made by a shoe and not by a moccasin, and then Hale recalled exultantly that the Red Fox did not have his moccasins on the morning he turned up on guard. All the while he kept a sharp lookout, right and left, on the ground—the Red Fox must have thrown his cartridge shell somewhere, and for that Hale was looking. Across the brook he could see the tracks no farther, for he was too little of a woodsman to follow so old a trail, but as he stood behind a clump of rhododendron wondering what he could do, he heard the crack of a dead stick down the stream, and noiselessly he moved farther into the bushes. His heart thumped in the

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silence—the long silence that followed—for it might be a hostile Tolliver that was coming, so he pulled his pistol from his holster, made ready, and then noiseless as a shadow, the Red Fox slipped past him along the path, in his moccasins now, and with his big Winchester in his left hand. The Red Fox, too, was looking for that cartridge shell, for only the night before had he heard for the first time of the whispered suspicions against him. He was making for the blind and Hale trembled at his luck. There was no path on the other side of the stream and Hale could barely hear him moving through the bushes. So he pulled off his boots and, carrying them in one hand, slipped after him, watching for dead twigs, stooping under the branches, or sliding sidewise through them when he had to brush between their extremities, and pausing every now and then to listen for an occasional faint sound from the Red Fox ahead. Up the ravine the old man went to a little ledge of rocks, beyond which was the blind, and when Hale saw his stooped figure slip over that and disappear he ran noiselessly toward it, crept noiselessly to the top and peeped carefully over to see the Red Fox with his back to him and peering into a clump of bushes—hardly ten yards away. While Hale looked, the old man thrust his hand into the bushes and drew out something that twinkled in the sun. At the moment Hale's horse nickered from the bushes, and the Red Fox slipped his hand into his pocket, crouched listening a moment, and then step by step backed toward the ledge. Hale rose:

"I want you, Red!"

The old man wheeled, the wolf's snarl came, but the big rifle was too slow—Hale's pistol had flashed in his face.

"Drop your gun!" Paralyzed, but the picture of white fury, the old man hesitated.

"Drop—your—gun!" Slowly the big rifle was loosed and fell to the ground.

"Back away—turn around and hands up!"

With his foot on the Winchester, Hale felt in the old man's pockets and fished out an empty cartridge shell. Then he picked up the rifle and threw the slide.

"It fits all right. March—toward that horse!"

Without a word the old man slouched ahead to where the big black horse was restlessly waiting in the bushes.

"Climb up," said Hale. "We won't 'ride and tie' back to town—but I'll take turns with you on the horse."

The Red Fox was making ready to leave the mountains, for he had been falsely informed that Rufe was to be brought back to the county seat next day, and he was searching again for the sole bit of evidence that was out against him. And when Rufe was spirited back to jail and was on his way to his cell, an old freckled hand was thrust between the bars of an iron door to greet him and a voice called him by name. Rufe stopped in amazement; then he burst out laughing; he struck then at the pallid face through the bars with his manacles and cursed the old man bitterly; then he laughed again horribly. The two slept in adjoining cells of the same cage that night—the one waiting for the scaffold and the other waiting for the trial that was to send him there. And away over the blue mountains a little old woman in black sat on the porch of her cabin as she had sat patiently many and many a long day. It was time, she thought, that the Red Fox was coming home.

XXVIII

And so while bad Rufe Tolliver was waiting for death, the trial of the Red Fox went on, and when he was not swinging in a hammock, reading his Bible, telling his visions to his guards and singing hymns, he was in the Court House giving shrewd answers to questions, or none at all with the benevolent half of his mask turned to the jury and the wolfish snarl of the other half showing only now and then to some hostile witness for whom his hate was stronger than his fear for his own life. And in jail bad Rufe worried his enemy with the malicious humor of Satan. Now he would say:

"Oh, there ain't nothin' betwixt old Red and me, nothin' at all—'cept this iron wall," and he would drum a vicious tattoo on the thin wall with the heel of his boot. Or when he heard the creak of the Red Fox's hammock as he droned his Bible aloud, he would say to his guard outside:

"Course I don't read the Bible an' preach the word, nor talk with sperits, but

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thar's worse men than me in the world—old Red in thar for instance"; and then he would cackle like a fiend and the Red Fox would writhe in torment and beg to be sent to another cell. And always he would daily ask the Red Fox about his trial and ask him questions in the night, and his devilish instinct told him the day that the Red Fox, too, was sentenced to death—he saw it in the gray pallor of the old man's face, and he cackled his glee like a demon. For the evidence against the Red Fox was too strong. Where June sat as chief witness against Rufe Tolliver—John Hale sat as chief witness against the Red Fox. He could not swear it was a cartridge shell that he saw the old man pick up, but it was something that glistened in the sun, and a moment later he had found the shell in the old man's pocket—and if it had been fired innocently, why was it there and why was the old man searching for it? He was looking for evidence, he said, of the murderer himself. That claim made, the Red Fox's lawyer picked up the big rifle and the shell.

"You say, Mr. Hale, the prisoner told you the night you spent at his home that this rifle was rim-fire?"

"He did." The lawyer held up the shell.

"You see this was exploded in such a rifle?" That was plain, and the lawyer shoved the shell into the rifle, pulled the trigger, took it out, and held it up again. The plunger had struck below the rim and near the centre, but not quite on the centre, and Hale asked for the rifle and examined it closely.

"It's been tampered with," he said quietly, and he handed it to the prosecuting attorney. The fact was plain; it was a bungling job and better proved the Red Fox's guilt. Moreover, there were only two such big rifles in all the hills, and it was proven that the man who owned the other was at the time of the murder far away. The days of brain-storms had not come then. There were no eminent Alienists to prove insanity for the prisoner. Apparently, he had no friends—none save the little old woman in black who sat by his side, hour by hour and day by day.

And the Red Fox was doomed.

In the hush of the Court Room the Judge solemnly put to the gray face before him the usual question:

"Have you anything to say whereby sentence of death should not be pronounced on you?"

The Red Fox rose:

"No," he said in a shaking voice; "but I have a friend here who I would like to speak for me." The Judge bent his head a moment over his bench and lifted it:

"It is unusual," he said; "but under the circumstances I will grant your request. Who is your friend?" And the Red Fox made the souls of his listeners leap.

"Jesus Christ," he said.

The Judge reverently bowed his head and the hush of the Court Room grew deeper when the old man fished his Bible from his pocket and calmly read such passages as might be interpreted as sure damnation for his enemies and sure glory for himself—read them until the Judge lifted his hand for a halt.

And so another sensation spread through the hills and a superstitious awe of this strange new power that had come into the hills went with it hand in hand. Only while the doubting ones knew that nothing could save the Red Fox they would wait to see if that power could really avail against the Tolliver clan. The day set for Rufe's execution was the following Monday, and for the Red Fox the Friday following—for it was well to have the whole wretched business over while the guard was there. Old Judd Tolliver, so Hale learned, had come himself to offer the little old woman in black the refuge of his roof as long as she lived, and had tried to get her to go back with him to Lonesome Cove; but it pleased the Red Fox that he should stand on the scaffold in a suit of white—cap and all—as emblems of the purple and fine linen he was to put on above, and the little old woman stayed where she was, silently and without question, cutting the garments, as Hale pityingly learned, from a white table-cloth and measuring them piece by piece with the clothes the old man wore in jail. It pleased him, too, that his body should be kept unburied three days—saying that he would then arise and go about preaching, and that duty, too, she would as silently and with as little question perform. Moreover, he would preach his own funeral sermon on the Sunday before Rufe's day, and a curious crowd gathered to hear him. The Red Fox was led from

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jail. He stood on the porch of the jailer's house with a little table in front of him. On it lay a Bible, on the other side of the table sat a little pale-faced old woman in black with a black sun-bonnet drawn close to her face. By the side of the Bible lay a few pieces of bread. It was the Red Fox's last communion—a communion which he administered to himself and in which there was no other soul on earth to join save that little old woman in black. And when the old fellow lifted the bread and asked the crowd to come forward to partake with him in the last sacrament, not a soul moved: Only the old woman who had been ill-treated by the Red Fox for so many years—only she of all the crowd gave any answer, and she for one instant turned her face toward him. With a churlish gesture the old man pushed the bread over toward her and with hesitating, trembling fingers she reached for it.

Bob was on the death-watch that night, and as he passed Rufe's cell a wiry hand shot through the grating of his door, and as the boy sprang away the condemned man's fingers tipped the but of the big pistol that dangled on the lad's hip.

"Not this time," said Bob with a cool little laugh, and Rufe laughed too.

"I was only foolin'," he said, "I ain't goin' to hang. You hear that, Red? I ain't goin' to hang—but you are, Red—sure. Nobody'd risk his little finger for your old carcass, 'cept maybe that little old woman o' yours who you've treated like a hound—but my folks ain't goin' to see me hang."

Rufe spoke with some reason. That night the Tollivers climbed the mountain, and before daybreak were waiting in the woods a mile on the north side of the town. And the Falins climbed, too, farther along the mountains, and at the same hour were waiting in the woods a mile to the south.

Back in Lonesome Cove June Tolliver sat alone—her soul shaken and terror-stricken to the depths—and the misery that matched hers was in the heart of Hale as he paced to and fro at the county seat, on guard and forging out his plans for that day, under the morning stars.

(To be continued.)

THE HERESIES OF PAUL

By L. Allen Harker

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLARENCE F. UNDERWOOD

Tom Taggert stood behind his bar,
The time was fall, the skies was far,
The neighbours round the counter drawed,
And ca'mly drinked and jawed.
—*The Mystery of Gilgal.*

"WHAT," asked Paul, "is a whisky skin?"

Nobody answered for nobody knew.

We were sitting in the gardener's wheelbarrow under the walnut tree. To be accurate, Paul was in the wheelbarrow, Harry, Fiammetta, and I were sitting on the handles. Paul, of course, had a book. This time it was a small, thin book with paper boards: the front adorned by a picture of a little boy with bare feet, who carried a basket.

"Whisky skin," Harry repeated dubiously, "what's it say about it?"

At last came Colonel Blood of Pike,
And old Jedge Phinn, permiscus-like,
And each, as he meandered in,
Remarked, "a whisky skin"

read Paul.

"But where did they meander in?" Harry demanded.

"I think," said Paul, "it must have been some sort of a public house, like the 'Cat and Compasses,' you know, in the village."

"Oh, then I suppose it must have been some sort of a drink," Harry decided. "Go on! Read it out from the beginning."

Slowly and impressively my small brother read aloud "The Mystery of Gilgal" to his assembled family. Whenever Paul

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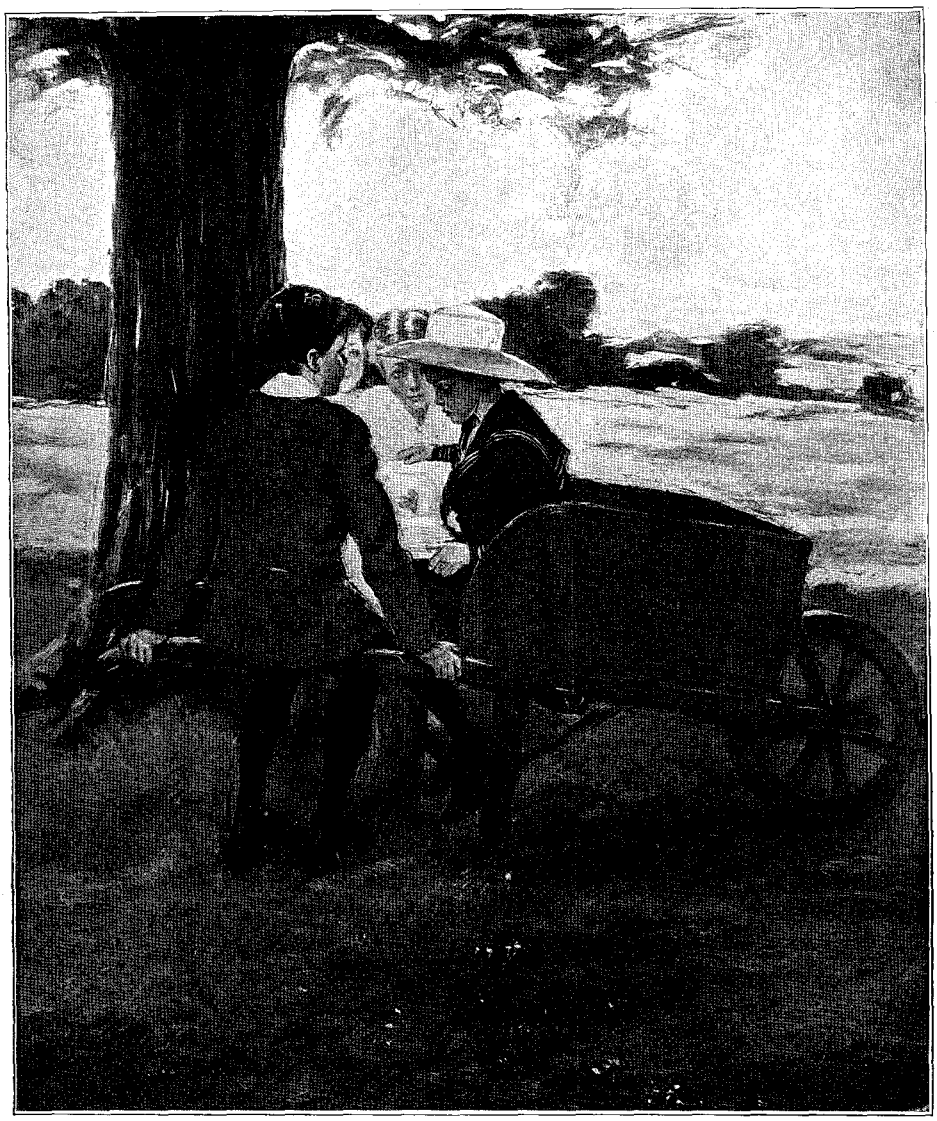

And each as he meandered in,
Remarked, "a whisky skin." —Page 240.

read aloud he put on, what Harry called, "his curate-like voice," and the effect just then was somewhat singular. His tones took on a hushed solemnity as he reached the lines:

> They piled the stiffs outside the door,
> They made, I reckon, a cord or more.

"What d'you suppose *stiffs* are?" he interrupted himself to ask.

"Oh, broken furniture and that. Go on," Harry said impatiently.

> Girls went that winter, as a rule,
> Alone to spellin' school,

and Fiammetta and I clutched each other trembling as we thought of the luckless damsels of Gilgal compelled to walk long miles unprotected in such wild and lawless times.

"By Jove!" Harry exclaimed admiringly, as Paul reached the final "Who got the whisky skin?" "Wherever did you get that book?" and he took it out of Paul's hands that he might read it for himself.

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"I found it in Uncle Claude's room after he'd gone, an' I took it away at once so they shouldn't send it after him. I like it most awfully, it's got such a lot of new-sounding words in it. I rather fancy," he added complacently, "that some of 'em's swear words. I like the first part best. The rest's more like other poetry books, sort of sad, you know, and nice sounding, but the first bit's awfully new, and makes you feel all funny."

"D'you understand it?" Harry asked, looking up from what he was reading.

"Not very well, but I like it. It sings in my head an' I say it in bed at night."

"*I* shouldn't like to say it in bed at night," Fiammetta declared with a shiver. "Boys do like such queer things, don't they, Janey?"

"Oh, you never can tell what Paul will like, he's so funny, you know."

I spoke with conviction and quite without animosity. And Paul, ever only too ready to avenge any supposed slight upon the scorner, let the remark pass without comment of any kind. He was quite accustomed to being thought funny, odd, curious, unlike other children. He did not, as do so many older people, consider that the peculiarity lay in those who dared to think him eccentric. Quite humbly he acknowledged his singularity. He even occasionally regretted it: but he realized, as indeed we all did also, that it was an inevitable, ineradicable, characteristic.

For instance, in this very matter of books —no other child of our acquaintance fell upon everything within two boards with the same greedy intensity. No other child carried whatever he happened to be reading with him into his every-day life: trying, with occasionally disastrous results, to bring the book doings into line with the ordinary occurrences of a little boy's daily pursuits in the country. Moreover, anything quite new, whether in life or literature, always appealed irresistibly to Paul: and as he was by no means a silent person as to the subjects that most occupied his thoughts, it came about that during the next few days we were all made quite familiar with the "Pike County Ballads": got lost with Little Breeches, "held her nozzle agin the bank" with Jim Bludso, and were carried out of fire by Banty Tim on Vicksburg Heights.

Our vocabulary was undoubtedly enlarged in a somewhat extensive and peculiar fashion, and our governess, Miss Goodlake, was driven nearly distracted by Paul's new *culte*.

It began first of all in Scripture lesson. Paul, having failed for the third time to name the Major Prophets in their right order, remarked wearily that he "didn't go much on religion" or "pan out" on these foretellers of events. And when Miss Goodlake told him that she had formed a resolution that he must learn his Scripture lessons, and that if he didn't, all sorts of dire consequences would ensue, all he said was: "You may resolute till the cows come home, but you can't make me learn them if I don't want to."

"Paul! what is the matter with you?" exclaimed that much-tried woman. "Why have you taken to express yourself in such an extraordinary fashion?"

Paul looked at her and sighed, "That's the way they talk in Pike county," he explained, with evidently little hope of making her understand. "I'm not quite sure where it is yet, but I like it. I'm going there when I'm grown up, and I shall have a bowie knife and a derringer and drink whisky and be a jedge and drive engines and I think I shall get drunk just once to see what it's like. I shan't bother about no old prophets there, I can tell you."

Miss Goodlake looked helplessly at us. "What *is* he talking about?" she cried.

"It's a book, as usual," I explained briefly.

"From all I can gather it's a most unsuitable book for a little boy," Miss Goodlake said severely. "Where is it, Paul? You had better give it to me at once."

"No," said Paul firmly, "I can't give it to you. It's hid away. It's not a lady's book; Fiammetta said so."

"Paul, I insist upon your giving me that book at once. Where is it?"

Paul turned his small, obstinate face to his governess. "'Tis the darkest, strangest mystery," he whispered importantly, "I ever read, or heern, or see, is long of a drink at Taggart's hall," here he paused, then added in a tone of polite explication, "'Tom Taggart's of Gilgal,' you know."

Miss Goodlake sank back in her chair and sighed deeply. "Sometimes, Paul," she said sadly, "I wonder if you are quite responsible for the things you say."

"Oh, no," he cried eagerly. "*He's* responsible, the colonel man what wrote it."

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"You may resolute till the cows come home but you can't make me learn them if I don't want to."—Page 242.

"Colonel or no colonel," Miss Goodlake said, "all I can say is, that he is evidently not an author who writes for little boys, and the sooner we cease to discuss his works the better it will be for all parties. Now name the prophets mentioned in the Bible before the book of Hosea . . . go slowly and think."

I suppose Paul managed the prophets somehow, for I don't remember any further discussion about them that day. But his mind was still full of his new find and the exact meaning of whisky skin still bothered him. He seldom made direct enquiries of the authorities at home regarding things that puzzled him, for their attitude was only too often unsympathetic. He preferred to ferret things out for himself and was wont to go as far afield as possible in his searches after truth. Thus it came about that the day after his difference of opinion with Miss Goodlake he seized the first opportunity of making enquiries outside.

After lunch, our governess took Fiammetta and me to play with some little friends in a neighboring village. Harry was busy with his lessons at the vicarage, and Paul was left with nurse and Lucy. It was an extremely hot afternoon, and nurse wheeled Lucy in her perambulator into the wood,

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and sat down herself in the cool shade of an elm tree to finish a piece of embroidery. It was one of father's rules that we were allowed to wander at sweet will anywhere about "the place," therefore did nurse make no objection when Paul strolled out of sight down the pathway leading to the village. He was accompanied by Thor, his great dignified deerhound, and nurse, who hated answering questions, bade him go for a stroll and come back to her in ten minutes or so.

But Paul was big with a mighty purpose, and the minute he had turned the corner of the path, and was safely hidden from nurse by the undergrowth, he ran. The path through the wood ended in a road that led directly to the village. There was a five-barred gate at the end of the path and it was locked. But what country child was ever deterred by a locked gate? Paul scrambled over, followed more gracefully by Thor, and the two hurried down the hot high-road till they reached a low three-gabled house, which differed from most of the houses in the village inasmuch as it had no garden in front but stood right on the footpath, while over it's hospitably open door swung a creaking faded sign, whereon were depicted a largely smiling cat and a pair of mason's compasses.

Here Paul pulled up, breathless, his nose bedewed with beads of perspiration, and in preparation for his call he rubbed his face on the cotton sleeve of his blouse. It was such a hot afternoon. The village street was absolutely deserted. Being Monday all the mothers were busy in their back gardens hanging out the weekly wash to dry. The men were all in the fields getting in the hay. The hot, still air shimmered in waves and ripples as though it, too, were panting with the heat. Thor, his tongue hanging out and his great tail swishing to and fro to keep off the flies, watched Paul with mild, enquiring eyes.

"Now, Thor," said Paul, "I'll explain."

Thor waited politely expectant.

"I'm Colonel Blood of Pike, and you, Thor, have got to be Jedge Phinn. You must try and look a bit more fiercer-like—like this."

Here Paul frowned heavily and tried to cock his hat at a truculent angle. Now it is almost impossible to cock a wide-brimmed sailor hat that has been turned down all round for purposes of shade, but Paul tried his best. In his mind's eye he beheld a tall, ferocious-looking man, wearing a red shirt and high boots, who carried a bowie knife and a revolver thrust into his belt. Paul would like him to have had a sword as well, but it didn't seem to come into the picture. He felt anxiously to ascertain that Colonel Blood's accoutrements were all in order. These consisted of a leather belt, borrowed without the formality of a request, from Miss Goodlake: a knitting stick of mother's, and a toy pop gun, which, having done yeoman service in games of all kinds for many years, no longer popped. These weapons had been concealed beneath his blouse while he was still subjected to the searching scrutiny of nurse. He now displayed them as conspicuously as possible, while Thor continued to pant and smile as only an affectionate dog can smile.

"You don't look nearly fierce enough, Thor," Paul exclaimed discontentedly. "You don't look a bit like Jedge Phinn, look at me!"

Thor looked, and the adoring love in his wine-brown eyes was such that Colonel Blood of Pike was melted, and stooping, kissed Jedge Phinn upon his hairy forehead, remarking, "Poor old dear, I daresay you do your best; p'raps he was an amiable sort of chap. Come on!"

An immemorial smell of beer hung thick about the entrance to "The Cat and Compasses," and Colonel Blood of Pike sniffed dubiously as he strode across the threshold.

"I wish I knew exactly how one meanders," he murmured to himself. "I expect it's something like this."

"This" was a series of the long steps and stamps usually associated with villainy of all kinds in provincial theatres. Jedge Phinn looked rather surprised at his companion's mode of entrance, but followed meekly in his customary graceful fashion, though he, too, sniffed the air enquiringly.

"The Cat and Compasses" was entered by a narrow, stone-flagged passage. Just inside the front door, on the right-hand side, was the common room also stone flagged and sanded: a largish room, where the odor of the many hams dependant from the ceiling strove with the smell of beer for mastery. On the whole, the beer had it. Two high-backed settles flanked each side of the open fireplace and a table across a door

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Drawn by Clarence F. Underwood.

Once more Paul recited "The Mystery of Gilgal."—Page 248.

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leading to another room behind, constituted the bar. But customers generally sat on the settles and drank their liquor leisurely.

The yellow window blind was down; but as it did not fit, long shafts of sunlight, bright with dancing motes, were stretched across the room. On one of the settles, fairly shaded by its high back, reposed the landlord, "Garge" Mumford; a stout, somnolent figure in shirt-sleeved, slippered ease; coat, waistcoat, and even braces discarded. Like the rest of the village, the "Cat and Compasses" was very still, the only sound being the intermittent snores of its landlord.

Jedge Phinn pricked up his ears; but Colonel Blood, stern of purpose, stamped across the floor and tapped loudly on the table with his penny.

The landlord never stirred.

"A whisky skin, if you please," Colonel Blood said in his most curate-like voice, while Jedge Phinn advanced toward the deeply sleeping Mr. Mumford and licked his loosely clasped hands; hands clasped upon that portion of his person described by Paul as "so round in front."

Still he did not wake.

"I wonder what they'd have done if they'd found Tom Taggart as sound asleep as this?" Colonel Blood muttered to himself.

Insensibly his hand sought the weapons in his belt and selected the knitting stick. This was a smoothly turned piece of wood somewhat dagger-like in shape, which had been made for mother by an old man in the village. Old-fashioned knitters hold it under the arm and rest one of the needles in its end hollowed out for the purpose. Mother never used it, and Paul had long ago annexed it for his private amusement.

Now he dug the sharp end somewhat vigorously into one of Garge Mumford's portly legs, and that worthy woke with a start.

"What the . . ." he exclaimed loudly, and stopped abruptly: for on opening his eyes he beheld his wholly unexpected callers.

"I'm sorry I had to prod you, Mr. Mumford," Paul hastened to apologize, "but I couldn't seem to make you hear."

"My stars! Good fathers! if it baint Mazter Paul, to be sure!" and portly Garge rose hastily to his feet. "Who sent you, my dear, and what be you pleased to want?"

"Nobody sent me," Paul said with dignity, "I've come all by myself 'cept Thor, and I want a whisky skin, if you please."

Paul offered his penny to Mr. Mumford who evidently could not believe his ears, for he repeated, "*What* did you please to want, my dear?"

"A whisky skin," Paul said again firmly and loudly.

The landlord scratched his head and sat down again on the settle. "I don't seem to onderstand nohow," he muttered.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Paul, "I thought *you'd* sure to."

"Sit you down alongside of me, Mazter Paul, do'ee now, and you tell me quiet what it is as you do want."

"I've told you already, Mr. Mumford, I want a whisky skin—a WHISKY SKIN! Don't you know what that is?"

"Well, sir, I can't say as I do. I've 'eerd tell of whisky, sure enough: not as many drinks it about 'ere; gin's their tipple when they do 'ave spirits, but it's mostly beer. And skins I do know, same as potatoes or horanges or birds or beasteses, but the two together I 'aven't never 'eerd tell on."

"Mr. Mumford," Paul said confidentially, sliding up the settle a little nearer to his host, "Have you ever been drunk?"

"Now, don't 'ee, Mazter Paul! Don't 'ee! Whoever bin a settin' you on to ast me a question the like o' that? You'd never think on it your own self an' I'm sure t'aint squoire, nor 'is good lady, nor yet passon. It's them nasty, hinterferin' distric' visitors, I'll be bound; wi' their guilds and sech fandanglements. Don't you be led away wi' none of it Mazter Paul. An' me allus' kep' sech a respectable 'ouse too. Don't 'ee go for to do it, my dear, don't 'ee be led away wi' none o' that there caddle."

Mr. Mumford spoke with such energy, his voice was so vibrant with emotion, and his feelings so manifestly hurt, that Paul placed a small brown hand on the offended publican's knee saying earnestly, "Mr. Mumford, dear, I only asked because I thought p'raps you'd know and tell me what it was like. I want to know so badly. No one told me to ask you. No one knows I'm here. It was quite out of my own head, really. And I'm awfully sorry if it was rude. I suppose I'll have to wait till I can do it myself, then I'll know."

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"We ca'mly drinked and jawed," said Paul.—Page 248.

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Mr. Mumford's red countenance assumed once more its customary joviality, for Paul's explanation was stamped by unmistakable veracity and sincerity.

"All right, Mazter Paul, all right, my dear; I allus 'ave 'eerd as you be the hold-fashionedest piece as is. I suppose it's that as makes you talk so oncommon queer. But now what's all this about whisky an' takin' too much an' that? 'Tain't no thoughts for the likes of you, really 'tain't. . . . But if so be now as you'd like a glass o' ginger pop this 'ot afternoon, whoi . . ."

The landlord rose on hospitable thoughts intent. He pushed back the table placed across the door leading into the inner room, and reappeared in a minute or two with two foaming glasses on a tin tray. One was a little browner than the other.

"'Ere, Mazter Paul," he said genially, "you 'ave some o' this. 'Tis a lot better for you nor whisky."

"Do you think," Paul asked before he tasted his own glass, "that you could give this gentleman a little water in a bowl? He's firsty too."

Jedge Phinn being duly supplied, Paul and Mr. Mumford sat down side by side on the settle and drank in silence.

"If I said you the whole poem do you think you could explain it a bit?" Paul asked presently.

Mr. Mumford nodded thrice, and once more Paul recited "The Mystery of Gilgal," his audience, looking much puzzled, but listening with absorbed attention. When Paul had finished the landlord laid his empty glass on the settle and slapped his leg.

"Well, I never 'eerd the like o' that, neither. 'Twere a lawless place, you take my word for it, so quarrelsome and snatchin' as they was. 'Tis plain, my dear, as that there whisky skin be an outlandish furrin' way o' sayin' ''ot without' which do mean whisky neat, an' much too strong it be for most. I allus 'ave 'eerd as eddication's gettin' beyond everything, but when it comes to larnin' babes the like o' that there poetry, I'm done with it, that I be. Well, well, to be sure now!"

"Do you know where Pike county is, Mr. Mumford?"

. "Well, no, I can't say as I do, but I should think as it's in Ireland by the sound on it. All them rampageous doin's sounds like fenians and sech. Though what a jedge was doin' in such company passes me."

A clock in the back room struck five.

"Oh, dear!" cried Paul. "It's tea-time, here's my penny and I'm much obliged, Mr. Mumford——"

The landlord waved away the proffered penny. "You kip un, Mazter Paul, for to buy 'umbugs, you're very welcome to all as you've 'ad."

"Come, Thor, we must run like anything," cried Paul, and the two hastened away. In the drive they met father.

"Where on earth have you been?" he demanded; "nurse has been looking for you everywhere."

Paul raised his small, flushed face, and the big, kind face looking down into his was so reassuring that he answered without any hesitation, "We've been to visit Mr. Mumford at 'The Cat and Compasses,' but he couldn't tell us much, though he was very kind."

Father thrust his hands deep into his pockets and surveyed his younger son.

"So you've been to 'The Cat and Compasses,' eh? And what did you do there?"

"We ca'mly drinked and jawed," said Paul.

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THE POINT OF VIEW

EVERY time Mr. Theodore Davis uncovers one of those old Egyptian tombs in the Valley of the Kings, I drop other matters to read about it and to look at the pictures of the various objects of ornament and service which have been dragged from a cryptic darkness and silence of several thousand years. And presently I find myself vaguely trying to realize two things—the first of these being the fact that the old races who created and filled these forgotten tombs really lived and walked and were busy, and perhaps considered themselves moderns, even as we hurry up and down and fuss over things and plume ourselves to-day.

We, the Ancients

It is not so difficult to accept this idea. Some of the articles—the furniture and fabrics, especially—are so curiously like those on sale in our present-day department stores that I feel tempted to invite those old first-owners of them to bring their latest patterns of French chairs, their sofa pillows and their embroidery pieces, and sit sociably with us in the circle of modernity, where they belong.

Then, suddenly, there sets in the second and longer drift of thought—the effort to realize that it is not they who are moderns with us, but we who are ancients with them, in the very morning of history. I want to engrave that second fact a little deeper here. For my own closer acceptance of it I want to record here and now that *we are the ancients*—as ancient as ever were those who walked the streets of Thebes or did business in purple Tyre.

The story of mankind is still in its swaddling clothes. A record that is not above six thousand years long is a puny thing—a beginning—the merest preface of a history. It may be that man himself has existed longer than six thousand years. We have evidence—voiceless evidence—that he has existed a good deal longer than that. But we have no history of such existence. Our history begins with Adam and ends with the present moment. It does not cover a long span, compared with other periods—geologic and astronomic periods—or with those interminable vistas that stretch down the ages which lie ahead. We do not know how long man has really existed, and it is unprofitable to guess how much longer his race will continue, but there is a likelihood that it will last a good deal longer than another six thousand years. It may even last a hundred times that long. But if it last only ten times six thousand, long before the end of that allotment we of the first six thousand will all be ancients together, barely distinguishable in our separations of race and time. The traveller standing at the end of the speeding train and looking down at the track sees only the ties just below him in their proper relation as to distance, while those just behind are closing together like a long bellows until they blend into a gray line that stretches away to the horizon's rim. And so do the days and the seasons and the years go speeding under our feet, linking themselves so closely that even the student of history, with vision trainedly acute, finds it difficult to separate episodes and to distinguish men. When sixty thousand years have drifted by—a brief time, believe me—the earth dweller of that day will need to dig deeply into his reference to learn whether it was Abraham Lincoln or Moses who led the Israelites to freedom; whether it was Ulysses of Ithaca who was conspicuous in the battles around Troy or an American general by the same name.

We shall all be ancients together, then, we old fellows of the first six thousand years. Rameses will march with Cæsar, Cæsar will commune with Napoleon, and in the infinite perspective behind they will march so nearly abreast that only the keenest chronological vision will be able to distinguish the days between.

And the antiquarian of that far future day will ponder and delve in an effort to comprehend our ancient civilization, and will praise or condemn it, according to his lights. In either case he will marvel at it and will sigh that he could not have lived in these old, old musty days. He will be eaten with envy of us who have dwelt so near to creation's dawn, who had to battle with the problems of distance

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and gravitation and cold and electricity; who had to get along with imperfect instrument and crude appliance because our world was new. He will know something of the tablets and the papyrus we scattered in Egypt and Syria; something too, perhaps, of the parchments of Greece and Rome; and there may remain a tradition of the perishable printed books which followed these things. Or did the books come first? It will be a question for debate. How he will hunt and excavate for some of the things we are flinging away, and will cherish the tiniest fragment that will bear evidence to our old, old story. How rich I feel when I think of that! How privileged to be counted among the world's pioneers, pitching my tent and building my camp-fire with those other early settlers, the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Mound-builders and all the rest, on the first dry ground after the flood.

And that is not all. We shall be Mythology, by and by. We shall drift back and back until we blend with the Golden Age itself, dwellers in Arcady tripping measures to the pipes of Pan. We shall hearken to the Oracle of Delphi, we shall gather the Apples of the Hesperides and join with Jason in the search for the Golden Fleece. I have always wanted to live in that time. I have never quite realized that I belong in it already, but those far dreamers in the perspective of infinity will realize it and they will link us with the gods. I am going to get ready for that time when I shall be near enough to the Golden Age to listen to the music of Orpheus and perhaps sail with Achilles to Western Isles.

But we shall not remain always with the gods. Back and still back until we shall walk hand in hand with the brontosaur, cousin to the moa, brother to the troglodyte. I suppose we shall become mere geology after that—a fossil layer, a film of oblivion. The moderns of a million years hence will scrape ledges to find us and will put us into glass cases and perhaps classify an ostrich as a man. How old, how incalculably old we shall be then! The wisest, the mightiest, the most moral, the most strenuous among us old fellows of the first six thousand will have become little more than a trace in the Quarternary formation. But what a glory to be even a trace in a geological procession when it means that you are lying down with the trilobite and the troglodyte, and with those old first races of recorded history, in the silence of creation's sunrise. How we ought to hug ourselves, remembering those cheaply vulgar and perhaps fragile moderns who will greedily delve for us and glorify us a million years hence—we, the discoverers, the pioneers, the conquerors—we, the grand old ancients of the earth!

THE teacher who came to the confessional in the April number of this magazine made a sad showing for his profession. Surely the average pedagogue must have gone off a good deal since my own school-days; for one quite understands that it is the average and not the excellent teacher who is described—the one who helps to compose the type. But why, with all our boasted advance in education, should there have been any going off? Why is the typical teacher a person of "fictitious bearing," uneasily reserved, dogmatic, didactic, inordinately devoted to petty details of form, pedantic, opinionated, and at the same time meek and subservient? Why, in short, has he no sense of proportion? Partly, of course, because of his being shunted off from the main track of the active life of society, just as women lose it by living a too exclusively domestic life. Every woman knows how quickly those of her troubles which are really petty are relegated to their proper place by a little diversion—a walk on a bright day, a meeting with friends, anything which, as the phrase is, takes her out of herself. But there is more in the case of the teacher than can be accounted for by monotony, seclusion, "herding with others of their kind."

Some Reasons Why

It may be instructive to find out what have been the teacher's early surroundings. If he comes of a family which has had any advantage of acquaintance with the world, he may be expected to show some variation from the type presented to us in the "Confessions." If, on the other hand, he belongs to bookish people who, either from choice or necessity, are aloof from active interests he may set an exaggerated value on formal so-called education and may ignorantly despise everything outside of his books, but one will hardly expect him to be dragged down to an A B C level. He may be narrow, but it will most likely be the narrowness of the student and not the pettiness of the devotee of the "spelling method," the "sentence method," or the "paragraph method." But there is, as we all know, a third class from which the ranks of the teachers are largely recruited, the class which knows absolutely

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nothing of education outside of the walls of a public school.

For instance, your red-cheeked, red-armed washer-woman, an honest soul, who does not mix too large proportion of destroying acids with her soapsuds, has among her large family of children one who is cleverer than the rest. Little Maggie, playing about the streets of a Saturday, and showing a not too intimate personal acquaintance with the soap and water from which her daily bread is derived, is for five days in the week a serious little scholar. She works her way through grade after grade of the public school, with no distracting home influences to tempt her aside into flowery fields of desultory reading or thinking. True, she reads a novel, sometimes, but her taste in fiction is apt to be set according to the family standard of crudity. The family ambition is centred in Maggie. Her services at home are dispensed with, and when her sisters go out into the world to earn wages she is sent to the higher schools and presently graduates from the highest one of the series, a neat, trim, shirt-waisted Miss Margaret, with her diploma to show how successfully she has trodden the narrow way marked out for her by the school system. For that system she has a profound respect and would not think of adding, subtracting or multiplying except by the use of the proper form of words. It must have been hard for her to acquire a grammatical habit of speech, but even that difficulty may be surmounted by a person with a quick ear and plenty of determination. It is not always conquered. There is an authenticated case of a man, the principal of a school in a small New England town, who, in response to some question put to him by a member of a committee appointed to investigate school matters, said, with the dignity of conscious rectitude: "I was told to teach them grammar—and I done so."

For Miss Margaret there is no difficulty in obtaining a teacher's certificate, and she starts out to impart exactly the knowledge which she has gained, in exactly the form in which it was imparted to her. Possibly after a while she gives up school-teaching and marries, and in my opinion she can do the community no better service. Let her children teach if they will. Their outlook will be broader than their mother's was, for with her wider experience of life she will teach them better than she taught her first pupils. If, however, she does not marry, she is likely to go to summer schools and teachers' conventions, and will probably become wedded to narrow forms and theories, and will insist upon it that your every idea must have been derived from Professor Somebody's "educational works." Although, at her worst, Irish Maggie will not take herself so seriously as her colleague of New England ancestry.

Or again, take the case of a boy, the son of humble and uneducated parents. He does not have a chance, any more than Maggie, to get any enlargement of mind in the casual way of home conversation, to take it in at the pores, so to speak. Not for him, any more than for her, the good fortune of listening, open-eyed and open-eared, to the table talk of clever people. To him, too, the straight and narrow way of the public-school system is the only way that lies open. If his thirst for knowledge is general, if his talents are versatile, and if he is not bound down by circumstance, he may yet become an intellectually cultivated man, but as likely as not, he runs to a specialty. Then he bends every energy to train himself in that specialty. Life is too short, he thinks, and probably money is too scarce for him to lay a broad foundation; besides, he does not desire it and he has no one to advise him, for when he gets into college his professors are specialists themselves. He becomes, let us say, a good entomologist and seeks and obtains a professorship. Possibly his gift may be linguistic, but his situation as to general cultivation is about the same. Time was when a man who studied Latin also studied Greek—and perhaps some other things—and a classical education was a synonym for a certain breadth of culture. Times have changed. A recent writer in the *Nation*, deploring the modern specialized college faculty, says: "We have recently known even a professor of Latin to be driven to outside help by a Greek quotation in a paper which it became his duty to put through the press."

So then, my dear Professor of Pedagogy, what are you going to do about it? And what are we, who send our children to school, going to do about it? However, the children who hear good talk at home will not be much hurt by the narrowness of the school system, while a few years of rigid and accurate adherence to forms may do them good. Neither will the children who shake off school life and go into trades and handicrafts suffer particularly. But as for those who graduate from pupils into teachers and go to school in one capacity or the other all their lives, they are fit objects of commiseration.

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LOWELL maintained that he "loved to enter pleasure by a postern." But nobody is so constituted that he likes to enter a pleasure-resort by the back door through a preliminary kitchen-midden in the back yard. Yet this is what every American has to do whenever he betakes himself to such a resort. For that matter, it is what every commuter has to do every time he takes the evening train for home. The eye of little employment having the daintier sense, according to Shakespeare, and afflictions inducing callosities, according to Sir Thomas Browne, this is by no means so grievous to the commuter as to the guest to whom he has sung the beauties of his suburban paradise, and who has to go through a purgatory of a "business quarter" to reach the same. The paradise, when it is reached, may really come up to the brag, but the sensibilities of the visitor have been too much rasped to enable him to appreciate it.

A "Resort" Requirement

Entering almost any American town, big or little, is in fact entering by an unkempt "postern." The railroad itself seems to have an unfailing instinct for the slum, which it customarily creates. You cannot make the "yard" of an important station attractive, though you may make it highly impressive in its repulsiveness. But with regard to the suburbs and the resorts, it is not the railroads which are most to blame. In fact, some of the most enlightened of them, quite comprehending that beauty is an asset for them in attracting settlers and commuters, take successful pains with the looks of their stations and of the immediate surroundings thereof. And, as everybody knows, it is in suburban work that our architecture is apt to show to the very best advantage. The improvement within a generation has been immense in the substitution of unpretending and homely picturesqueness in suburban cottages for cheap and tawdry display. But "the movement" has not in the least affected the suburban shopkeeper. The citizen of any of the great cities will have no difficulty in naming half a dozen of its suburbs which would be highly attractive if their commercial building were advanced to as high a plane as their residential building. And yet it is the benighted tradesmen whose own interest in the attractiveness of the place of their business is most immediate and acute who do their utmost to spoil it. Let the visitor to almost any suburb, or the nocturnal and Sabbatarian sojourner therein, fancy what the place might be if the "business street" were as good in its kind as the habitations in theirs. Let him, if travelled, try to imagine substituted for the business street such a village street as he may recall many of on the other side of the Atlantic, the modest, low-browed though still abundantly lighted shop-fronts, to which the tin cornice and other like abominations are unknown. Cease, Hope, cease that flattering tale!

Or, indeed, why should Hope cease? Why should she not rather insist that she is "talking business," as in sober fact she is. It is true that there is no cisatlantic object lesson to which she can point with unmingled pride. There have been some modest and fragmentary beginnings in that direction. There are such in Newport. The present point of viewer, or pointer of view, came with great pleasure the other day upon one in Princeton, N. J. One may hope that such things may exert an evangelizing influence upon the surrounding tradesmen whose faith has hitherto been unshaken in the monumental pretensions of the sheet-metal suburban commercial architecture. But, indeed, why should not the promoters of the suburb or resort take this matter into their own hands, as they so often can, when it is in effect a "proprietary" suburb or resort? Especially the resort, for the resort distinctly lives on the attractiveness which such an awful vestibule to it as the business quarter of Bar Harbor and the business quarters of so many of the coast resorts farther to the Southward do so much to destroy. So soon as this matter is recognized as a matter of business, it will be put on a better footing. And it clearly is a matter of business.

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THE FIELD OF ART

THE VALUE OF ART EFFORT

AMONG the pleasurable results of any cultivated art may be counted the problems it opens for discussion and the field it offers wherein the human mind may disport itself.

All high culture serves as a refuge from the ills of daily life. If, then, in this world there be a retreat from its banalities and cares would it not be well to discover it?

Not long ago I was brought into the living-room of a shrewd man of affairs—it was hung round with Monets—dazzling, sparkling, sunny, misty Monets. My host offered me a cigar, lighted one himself and sat down. The owner of these treasures then proceeded to dilate on the painter and his methods with an appreciation that was real. Never before had I been so convinced that art was a power outside the esoteric class with which I had too habitually associated it in my mind. Here was the artistic work of one of the boldest innovators in landscape art; of one who would have appealed only, I had supposed, to those who could follow with unblinking eyes his eagle glances into the blinding mysteries of light; without sentiment, as conventionally accepted—but stirring sentiment, as Nature does, by the blazing splendor of its truth. Still, whoever in the presence of the volume-weighted tide has been impressed by its fateful, slow but overwhelming approach—whoever on clear, sunny days has seen this sea dash joyously on wind-swept rocks, catching color from the sky, the clouds, the very reflection of itself upon itself, and has felt in any of these phases of the natural world the emotion that is named sentiment, to them Monet could supply it also; and he may not narrowly be charged with the lack of a quality which is his in a large measure. This emotion, this sentiment, had touched my friend through Monet's art. This man of affairs seemed to draw wells of refreshment from the living sources of a full, strong artistic temperament. Now, it is this refreshment of the human spirit that it is the province of art to supply. It is not alone for the pleasure of the eye that art exists, but for the exaltation of the human mind. For is there not a joy in noting what effect Nature has had on the interpreter, and how he has chosen to explain her beauty to the world? Think what it is to trace the mental processes of a mind like that of Monet, to mark his wonderful selection, to become conscious of what he has chosen to *omit* that he may the more forcibly impress! To be capable of this is to enter into some of the pleasures that all good art affords—into some of its intellectual and imaginative enjoyments. It would be well if the public could be more fully convinced that by experimenting in impressionism, that, in vividly striking the eye in order to touch more potently the mind, Monet and others have been an influence for good. But we would also add that they have given rise to much effort which seems an abuse of their methods. It must be conceded, however, that Monet himself, who works from conviction, has done much for modern painting. We will endeavor, in a measure, to explain why this is so. I am not lauding this painter to the exclusion of other successful workers possessed of this new faculty of "seeing"—I am merely citing him as a disciple of "light," and as one of the most brilliant accessions to the ranks of those who have given to art a new and clarified manner of using pigment to express those aspects of Nature which until recent years, have not been attained by means of color. And this reminds us that when phases of Nature are thus realized they touch the imagination, and in time become recognized as representing the natural aspect of the world by those who regarded its normal shape and color as something quite other than it is. To then go back and study what has passed for its natural appearance in the dark-brown transcripts of the early landscapists, and indeed of those of comparatively recent date, is to feel that scales have fallen from the eyes, and that these earlier painters themselves saw, "as in a glass darkly," while we now see "face to face." For it is undeniably true that the practice of painting in late years has stimulated the mere faculty of using the eyesight. A new and finer vision has been

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developed which has made it possible for painting to touch a wider range of emotions than it awakened in the past. This is of great importance, for it adds much to the value of all painted art.

How readily the human mind responds to this new presentation of the visual appearance of Nature I have instanced, in describing the effect produced by Monet's work on a busy man of financial affairs. The outside world may be regarded as the storehouse of the painter. For it is a fact that through this great storehouse of the natural world there is a band of workers going about choosing material that they may use, adapting it to the purpose they have in mind—selecting here, rejecting there the threads they are to weave in the tapestry of their pictured thought. These threads, these facts are the words they would employ in that ordered arrangement of ideas which forms their language—a language as old, almost, as that of uttered speech—the beautiful and universal language of art.

As in literature the process of verbal change is going on, so in painting methods are clarifying, touch and color are being subjected to new tests, and from this latter-day vocabulary, so to speak, lighter, more spontaneous, more amusing effects of Nature are springing into existence by which the mind, overburdened with the complexities of modern life is diverted, refreshed, carried out of itself through the sheer delight of new sensations. These sensations are by no means superficial—the range of art has widened; and, if at times it may strike some one that this extending of the emotional gamut is gained through sacrifice in another direction, this is but the inevitable condition of a transition state, and one that doubtless in time will remedy itself. If the fascinations of light and new secrets of color have carried painters' thoughts away, for the time being, from the virtue and integrity of form, there are already indications of a return to the sincerity of the Renaissance with the added treasure of a subtler appreciation of the bewitching charm of light.

Art could no more escape this modern note than could any other field of human thought evade the stimulating effect of widening horizons. It is this modern note, which is always anticipatory, that has caused those who have sounded it to stand in the somewhat uneasy attitude of the misunderstood. It is in such periods of artistic transition that the artist is tested; for if he look for immediate appreciation he is likely to be disappointed. His consciousness at such times of the true work he is endeavoring to do is a source of joy that sustains him. It has been so in all ages. What the world of to-day esteems, the contemporary world of its creation rarely held in high regard. It is therefore with satisfaction that one can now herald the fact that so radical a producer in the world of art as Monet, is coming into wide appreciation. It is the significance of this change that cheers. No free-spirited worker need now walk the fields discouraged, but rather he may let the seasons pour through him and upon his canvas if he truly feel them himself.

The disposition of the time seems to be that of arrested judgment, and therefore of increasing attention to the production of our artists. It is not enough, the layman must remember, that the age be graphic—it must be discriminatingly so: Pictures are now employed as purveyors of news—they appeal to the eye; this is well, but these must not be confounded with art, which appeals to the mind. Journalistic illustration and the camera may be stepping-stones—we can see in them, indeed, the influence that all graphic portrayal must exercise on the fine arts. A greater general familiarity with the outward forms of things is one of the results of reportorial illustration. A knowledge of the common aspect and shape of the outward world is rapidly becoming the property of the layman—so much so, that the comments frequently heard on the verisimilitude of a scene or of a person strike one as very shrewd. This keenness is of modern growth and may be justly attributed to constant contact with pictured things. This increased acuteness of observation on the part of the public is a factor that the artist of to-day reckons with. This is not going to hurt his art, but will impose upon it greater exactions than those to which his predecessor was subjected. There is demanded of the artist a closer adherence to the character and form of seen things by those who to-day know, through photographic processes, the shape of the commonest objects of life, as well as the personal identity of almost every individual of note. But this which might appear as a handicap to the painter is in reality an aid. These photographic reproductions present a scene in all its unessential detail—overloaded with facts of minor importance. Nature clamors on every side for attention to the wrong things, and mechanical processes reproduce them. The true artist will avoid these pitfalls

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while becoming more correct, through photography, in the general form of objects. But the inferior painter is distracted by these importunities and often yields to them—by this his art is lessened, his result is weakened, and he wonders why, when he has given so much, the "knowing" ones—the connoisseurs—prefer the synthetic rendering of another who has dared to omit. We must realize that the world of mere sight is nothing until informed by art. The artist breathes upon this world his informing spirit, and it then becomes other than it is: for it has passed into the domain of art.

A countenance of ordinary type may serve as a model by which the artist will produce a head of alluring loveliness—Why? Because the world exists for the artist as a world of symbols—nothing is precisely what he wants; but it is a world of intimation of another. These intimations, these suggestions so possess him at times, that his enthusiasm seems, to those of less insight, strangely misplaced.

Now, it is only by educating a public to follow him that the artist can expect to come into his own. The world of material interests is so much more obvious—but it is no more real! Art will not be widely appreciated until we possess a public of connoisseurs. It was the possession of such a public which so much helped the full flowering of the period of the Renaissance! That was a moment of material prosperity as well; as John Addington Symonds says: "The speech of the Italians at that epoch, their social habits, their ideal of manners, their standard of morality, the estimate they formed of men were alike conditioned and qualified by art. It was an age of splendid ceremonies and magnificent parade, when the furniture of houses, the armor of soldiers, the dress of citizens, the pomp of war, and the pageantry of festival were invariably and inevitably beautiful."

We of the twentieth century have been, as I have said, in that bewildering situation which marks all transition times in the world of progressive thought when, in the practice of any cultivated art, the artist breaks away from old formulas and becomes experimental. This is a sign of life and progress; and as I have indicated in the case of a lay appreciator of Monet's work there are those who are grateful for this new light. That this new vision, these aptitudes of the eye are becoming general many remarks of true lovers of Nature prove. Naturally the painter should lead the way in this matter as in his work he is obliged to deal with things of sight. Imitation is not his purpose, however, but interpretation. And I do not know how to more forcibly emphasize this truth than by quoting the thoughts of painters who have expressed themselves in words on art; for they occasionally give voice to the philosophy, so to say, of their work, and sometimes write upon their craft. How great artistic temperaments would interpret beyond the mere physical portrayal, how they would reach, if may be, into the mysteries of Nature at which her outside aspects hint, we become convinced when we note their comments respecting the way in which Nature impresses them.

Their emotions toward nature have been so strong that their language, their method of painting, has formed itself through very need of utterance. The apparently uncouth, clumsy, touch of Millet does not come from lack of skill, but rather from the very urgency of his desire to give to his profound sentiment toward toiling, rustic humanity in the fields a graphic presentation that will reveal it with power. No cock-sure technique of a Bouguereau or a Chartran would move the beholder to reflect on the benighted destiny of these human beasts of burden. Millet's drawing is powerful, significant and true; while for competency of brushwork one has only to refer to some of the really brilliant nudes to the painting of which, for a livelihood, he was obliged to resort in the early part of his career. He was great enough to sacrifice his skill to his chosen work at a later time.

Breton, with a less burdensome message to deliver, was still so alive to the splendors of the open air that he may almost be regarded as heralding the movement of the impressionists. It was in the early fifties, I think, that he gave us that sunny "Blessing of the Cornfields," a canvas palpitating with light and air. Let us turn to what these men have to say.

Jean François Millet in speaking of what he had been painting—a shepherd in the fold at night, a weird moonlight effect, said: "Oh, how I wish I could make those who see my work feel the splendors and terrors of the night! One ought to be able to make people hear the songs, the silences and murmurings of the air. They should feel the infinite." Jules Breton —"What is the sky to me if it does not give me the idea of infinity?" "Looking at a twilight scene it matters little that my eye should receive the impression of the view, if my spirit does not at once experience a feeling of repose,

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of tranquillity and of peace. The spirit of a subject should take precedence of the letter. Force, elegance, majesty, sweetness, splendor, grace, naïveté, abundance, simplicity, richness, humility—some one of these qualities, according to the genius of the painter and the nature of the subject, should strike the beholder, in every work, before he has had time to take in the details of the scene represented. These are the æsthetic virtues." And he goes on to say: "Just as many beauties as there are, just so many defects are there which assume the appearance of the former, and, misleading the public, give rise to ephemeral fashion. At the side of Beauty is Prettiness; of Grace and Elegance, Affectation; of Naïveté, Silliness; of Force, Heaviness; of Majesty, Pomp; of Softness, Insipidity; of Abundance, Prodigality; of Splendor, Tawdriness; of Simplicity, Poverty." These substitutes are so obvious that one can hardly realize their acceptance as alternatives of finer things—but the public mind is not yet so sensitive to truth that it immediately detects false or inadequate definition. It is not critical. Some one has said: "All beauty in the long run is only *fineness* of truth."

It may be asked by what means do Millet, Breton, and others convey the sense of "the splendors of the night," and "the idea of infinity" in the sky?

Only such results are reached by rare characters who, through the strength of their impressions received from Nature beget a power of expression that is theirs alone. It is by deep thought, and a willingness to eliminate anything that distracts the mind of the beholder from the essence of the scene—even to the suppression of their natural skill which, if permitted free play would be likely to attract admiration to itself, that they finally reach this consummate power.

"Be careful not to show your skill before your work," Millet also says.

Large natures, great men only are capable of this, and it is because they are of this quality that their emotions are communicated to and touch others. Now, the art effort is of worth as it makes us fastidious in matters of taste, so that at sight of anything false certain emotions will sound the alarm; for art is a language, and when we so understand it we shall start at untruthful statements and begin to question. We will no longer accept Prettiness for Beauty, nor Affectation for Grace. These may be as reasonably challenged as verbal misstatements, which seem always to be regarded as a legitimate field for controversy.

The artist's nice sense of proportion detects quickly whatever is overdone or outré in human intercourse. Based as it is upon truth, truth is demanded in all details of personal relations; for lapses are regarded as inartistic, out of proportion, and hence ugly. Beauty, that conformity to an ideal, is marred for them if certain canons of taste are ignored; and the ending of a tale, the construction of a play which precipitates illogically its dénouement, or any breach of poetic justice in social situations or worldly display is duly disapproved by those in whom a love of art has bred a high indifference to petty interests and petty conclusions. Hence the lukewarmness of true appreciators concerning the conventional amusements of society. They find them often not beautiful—badly planned. The Popes and Princes of the Renaissance impressed artists into the arrangement of their diversions and fêtes. A function under Leo X conceived and carried out by Raphael we may be sure was not lacking in distinction, was worth one's while to attend. A meeting of kings directed by Velasquez must indeed have made a royal picture. Such pageants were in themselves art creations. And this is a point we would wish to make—that the value of art is not confined to technical production merely. Its true worth lies in the fact that it so broadens the mind, so corrects and chastens the taste, that the mental attitude, through its influence, becomes elevated, and no room is left for narrow interests and sordid concerns—for these are warped and ugly things and find no asylum in the minds of those to whom beauty is real and all else untrue. For those who are thus sensitive life opens free and spacious, and hints, intuitions awakened by Nature and interpreted by the artist, lead up to moments quick with insight, when one realizes that he is, himself, something larger and finer than he dreamed of being.

FRANK FOWLER.

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Drawn by A. Castaigne.

LIFTED HIM UP BODILY AND STOOD HIM UP WHERE WAS THE KING.

"An Olympic Victor,"—Page 366.

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